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repercusión en ESPAÑA del conflicto de las MALVINAS

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El tema de las Malvinas ya empieza a estar olvidado en las veloces páginas de la prensa diaria. Su iniciación, desarrollo y desenlace fueron rápidos en el tiempo, pero perfectamente deslindados y hoy estamos en condiciones de cogerlo entre las manos, como hecho sustantivo e independiente y pretender su examen, al igual que el entomólogo puede hacer con su insecto.

LA INFORMACION ESPAÑOLA

Es preciso reconocer que el tema en España ha estado sometido a una especial deformación, quizá a una desinformación incluso subconsciente, polarizada por la lógica querencia de España hacia Argentina. En la visión española hay una carga emocional, sensibilizada por el caso Gibraltar, que nos impide, salvo excepciones, un análisis frío y razonable de la cuestión.

Se ha repetido en muchas ocasiones que las situaciones de Gibraltar y las Malvinas eran similares. Colonias en manos de Inglaterra, con acuerdos dictados por las Naciones Unidas y desconocidos por Inglaterra.

Sin embargo, el entonces presidente del Gobierno, señor Calvo Sotelo, lo clasificó como "distinto y distante"; "distinto" al de Gibraltar y "distante" en la distancia. Era un paso dado con la pretensión de desligarse de vínculos no queridos, de actos ajenos que nos podían complicar la vida. En general fue mal recibida esta declaración.

EL CONTENCIOSO

Es de destacar, por encima de cualquier previa consideración, la existencia real y punzante de un contencioso anglo-argentino en torno a estas islas. Argentina en 1820, estimando que le pertenecían por herencia todos los bienes patrimoniales del antiguo Virreinato del Río de la Plata, toma posesión de estas islas, desembarcando algunos soldados desde la fragata *Heroína*. Argentina alega, pues, la herencia española.

Por su parte, los ingleses alegan otra de las formas de adquirir la propiedad; en este caso, la soberanía, que es la ocupación, pues en 1833 la tripulación de la corbeta inglesa *Clio*, al mando del capitán Onslaw, toma posesión de las islas y expulsa a los argentinos.

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Guerra en las Malvinas

Por un lado se alega la herencia y por otro la ocupación. La sentencia no dará finalmente la razón completa a ninguno de los dos. Es lo normal, porque los pleitos de los hombres no resuelven gran cosa y casi siempre, con la sentencia en la mano, todos han perdido algo.

Puede ser un problema de derecho internacional, pero tiene un enfoque del "irredentismo", tan románticamente manejado por Gabrielle D'Annuzzio en torno al Fiume, último florón para ligar la unidad italiana.

Desde el irredentismo dannuzziano en adelante, los territorios irredentos forman una especie de segundo patrimonio moral de las naciones, que tenían preparados para su uso en cualquier insospechado momento. Este irredentismo, en el caso del Pasillo de Dantzig, coetáneamente con las teorías de los "espacios vitales", fueron la causa de la última conflagración mundial, al menos la causa inmediata.

LA SENTENCIA

El tema es relativamente corriente en el foro de las Naciones Unidas, que tienen establecido un principio general admitido sin restricciones, que es el de la descolonización. Se encuentra fijado en la Resolución 1.514, de 14 de diciembre de 1960, que contiene la afirmación tajante de que "todos los pueblos tienen derecho a su libre determinación". En virtud de este derecho, decidirán libremente sobre su condición política y perseguirán también libremente su desarrollo económico, social y cultural. Consecuentemente con esta doctrina, en 1964, el Comité Especial de Descolonización (el Comité de los 24), declaró a las Malvinas como territorio sujeto a descolonización y en 1965 dictan las Naciones Unidas, por vía de su Asamblea General, resolución instando a ambos gobiernos para hallar una solución al problema de las islas, en el que se habría de respetar la voluntad de sus habitantes. Es similar en todo al dictado para el caso Gibraltar en 16 de octubre de 1964: "...teniendo en cuenta los intereses de los habitantes del territorio".

Esta apelación en última instancia a los deseos e intereses de los habitantes del territorio de las islas Malvinas, sentenciaba de antemano la resolución final. Para este viaje no hacían falta alforjas. Aquella voluntad

no era, por descontado, la de convertirse en argentinos, ni querían vivir en el futuro bajo la bandera argentina. Eso estaba claro. Para las Naciones Unidas tenía poca importancia el escaso número de habitantes que habrían de expresar sus deseos. Eran nada más que mil ochocientos. Pero lo que importaba era mantener el principio de la autoderminación, porque los principios hay que mantenerlos por encima de todo.

Frente al principio de la autodeterminación esgrimido por Inglaterra, Argentina representaba el principio de la "integridad territorial" que también es otro principio que debe ser respetado y que forma parte del ideario de las Naciones Unidas, tanto como el de la "autodeterminación".

> "Todo intento encaminado a quebrantar total o parcialmente la unidad nacional y la integridad territorial de un país es incompatible con los propósitos y principios de la Carta de las Naciones Unidas".
>
> (Punto 6.º de la Resolución 1.514)

Obsérvese que Argentina reclama estas islas para su reintegración territorial, pese a que las mismas se encuentran a cerca de mil kilómetros del resto de la Argentina.

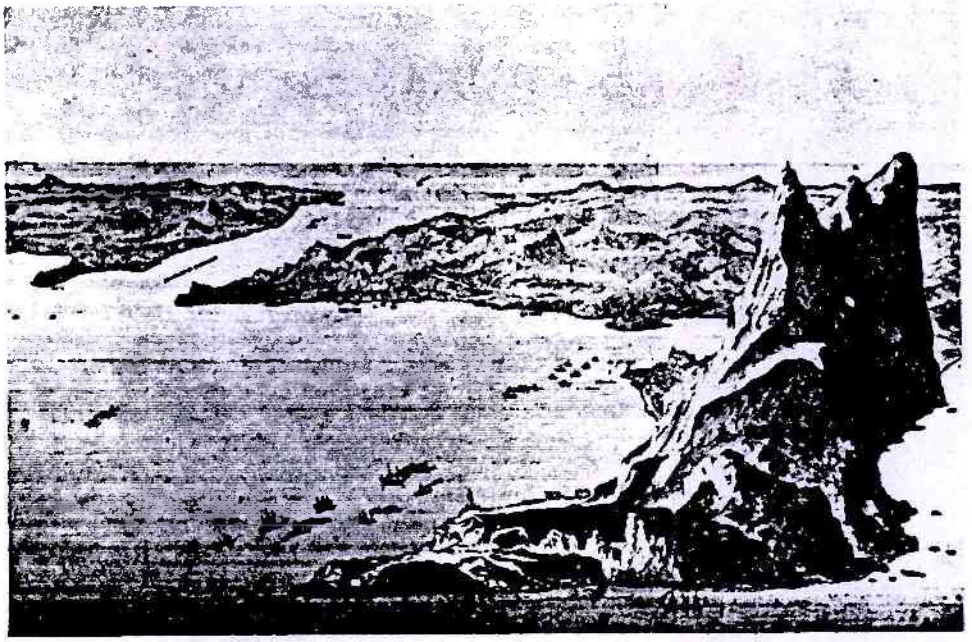
Inglaterra nunca ha negado el carácter colonial de este archipiélago.

Las tiene declaradas como islas Falkland en su lista de territorios no autónomos sujetos a descolonización, de los que está obligada a declarar y suministrar información a las Naciones Unidas. No oculta su clasificación de "colonia" y además, por su propia definición y naturaleza, no se puede negar a su descolonización, bien directamente, bien a instancia de las Naciones Unidas o bien por solicitud de los habitantes de las islas.

La piedra fundamental de las Naciones Unidas es la voluntad libremente expresada por las naciones que se encuentran sentadas en el gran hemiciclo internacional. Esta voluntad quiere decir democracia, pese al punto negro del derecho a veto reservado a los cinco grandes. Justo es reconocer que ni en el caso de las Malvinas ni en el de Gibraltar, Inglaterra ha hecho uso de su derecho de veto, ni tampoco en ninguno de los procesos de descolonización sufridos.

No sería coherente con este friso democrático inscrito en la puerta de las Naciones Unidas que el destino de los pueblos irredentos (o supuestamente irredentos) se vaya a cuajar a sus espaldas y sin su conocimiento y asentimiento. Por ello, en estas resoluciones se mantiene igualmente la coherencia democrática, al insistir en que deberán ser tenidos en cuenta las aspiraciones y deseos de sus habitantes.

ONU. Asamblea General



Una bella perspectiva del Estrecho (Grabado).

LA POSTURA ARGENTINA

Efectivamente, el tema de las Malvinas ocupa un lugar preferente en ese segundo patrimonio nacional argentino, constituido por los "irredentismos". A pesar de ello, ¿qué lugar de prioridad podía significar esta "noble obsesión" en la larga lista de problemas que acosaban al Gobierno argentino en aquellos momentos? Una simple ojeada a los dígitos proclamados de su inflación económica, a sus cifras de paro, a las silenciosas y elocuentes caminatas de las madres por la plaza de Mayo, son datos suficientes para colocar el problema malvinés en uno de los últimos lugares de las prioridades, máxime ante las perspectivas de que el precio a pagar por esta loca aventura podía ser altamente desproporcionado. Pero no se trataba de calcular unos verdaderos beneficios nacionales, sino unos beneficios gubernamentales, a base de canjear un racimo de problemas interiores, por un magno problema exterior, ante la esperanza de que el pueblo argentino se uniría a su gobierno en la ocasión bélica —como así fue— y que a la postre, y dada la distancia, Inglaterra se aquietaría ante el "hecho consumado". En estas condiciones y mediando estas circunstancias, el Gobierno argentino se decidió por la ocupación de las islas.

El trágico paso de las Malvinas fue un envite loco en la política doméstica del Gobierno argentino, valorando excesivamente el "hecho consumado" y la inmediata y acostumbrada resolución de las Naciones Unidas ordenando el alto el fuego y posteriores negociaciones, que ahora se mantendrían con la diferencia fundamental de estar poseyendo las islas. Pero no se valoró el tesón inglés, del que la primera ministra Margaret Thatcher estaba tan provista como lo estuvieron Churchill o Montgomery, mereciendo ese tratamiento algo medieval de la "Dama de Hierro".

LA POSTURA INGLESA

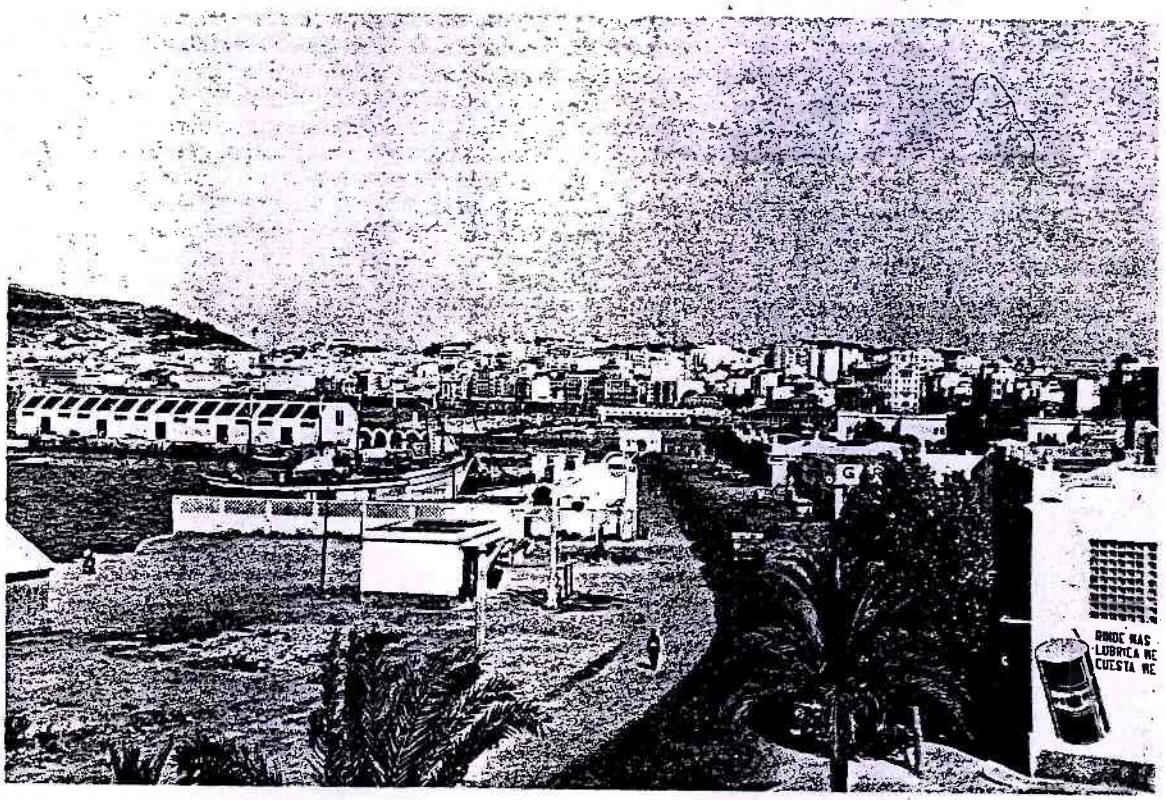
Aunque a los españoles nos pueda parecer paradójico, porque el caso "Gibraltar" lo tenemos muy presente en nuestras conjeturas, Inglaterra puede exhibir con orgullo una actuación muy brillante en el tema de la descolonización. La era de los grandes imperios desapareció tras la última guerra mundial. Hoy otras ideologías y otras estructuras similares están dividiendo el mundo. Los imperios fueron tragados por la propaganda americana, que, pasado el tiempo, se convirtió en un arma contra ellos, y también por las necesidades militares de apoyarse, en el Pacífico, en los pueblos colonizados, para conseguir librarse de los japoneses. En aquellos momentos se enseñó a estos países el gran potencial bélico que podían obtener de sus propios habitantes, empujados por un ideal de independencia, libertad y autodeterminación. También se dieron cuenta de que podían ser apoyados ideológica y materialmente por las grandes potencias, muy interesadas en desmontar el tinglado decimonónico de los grandes imperios.

Inglaterra concedió la independencia a la India, después de haber luchado con Gandhi y haberle admirado. Pakistán, Sri Lanka y Bangladesh derivan de aquella independencia. Seguidamente se apunta en su haber la independencia de Nigeria, Kenia, Uganda y otras muchas en Africa y en Asia, sin importarle que hubiera petróleo o miseria. Crea naciones pequeñitas, como las islas caribeñas de Trinidad y Tobago, Jamaica, Granada

o como, en el Pacífico, las islas Fiji y las Tonga, o terriblemente estratégicas, como Malta, que después se dedica al coqueteo con libios y rusos, vendiendo estrategia, o como Chipre. En el caso de Rodesia, desoye los clamores de una minoría blanca, con la que llega a enfrentarse, y al final termina por recuperar la soberanía de manos de esta minoría blanca, para entregarla seguidamente a la mayoría negra.

En todas las ocasiones, Inglaterra indagó la verdadera voluntad de los habitantes de los territorios a descolonizar, antes de aliviarles de esta vestidura. Prescinde de otros derechos históricos y geográficos, para situarse siempre ante el principio inmutable de la propia decisión del pueblo para decidir su destino, situándolo en un tiempo y en un lugar determinado, abstracción hecha de otros factores, que pueden acompañar y perfilar la situación de este territorio, pero que nunca serán los determinantes.

La situación geográfica de un pueblo en un lugar determinado y en un momento presente quiere decir tanto como el "aquí y ahora" que tanto se emplea en las discusiones políticas. Esta referencia al "lugar" del pueblo es una versión del concepto de la "posesión" que aquel pueblo ostenta de su territorio. La "posesión es un concepto civilista mucho más sutil que el de "propiedad". Inglaterra, enemiga de las abstracciones, se queda en el estrato jurídico de la "posesión", mucho más perceptible para cualquiera que las difíciles disquisiciones romanas acerca de la "propiedad". La posesión otorga siempre una protección jurídica a su titular, aunque este titular no posea con justo título.



Ceuta. Vista panorámica.

Claramente dice el artículo 441 del Código Civil español:

> "En ningún caso puede adquirirse violentamente la posesión mientras exista un poseedor que se oponga a ella".

La situación de un pueblo en un momento determinado y sobre un territorio concreto es una situación que debe ser respetada por encima de todo, y únicamente serán los hombres de este pueblo los que, sin violencia alguna de nadie, pueden cambiar la fisonomía de esta posesión o soberanía.

En esta secuencia de la descolonización ha habido éxitos, pero también tremendas agresiones contra esta quieta y pacífica posesión, siguiendo las normas coactivas del "hecho consumado" y ante la impotencia de las Naciones Unidas. La India, surgida de un difícil proceso de descolonización, fue la primera infractora de este orden, cometiendo la expoliación de la legítima posesión de Portugal sobre Goa, Damao y Diu, sin esperar a que sus habitantes manifestaran claramente sus deseos. Fue una primera "marcha verde". Después siguieron otras: Timor invadido por Indonesia y la del Sahara español.

LA SITUACION ESPAÑOLA

No podemos ocultar la cabeza debajo del ala y pensar que la "solución Malvinas" no va a tener repercusiones en el tratamiento de los problemas que acucian a España, por activa en el caso de Gibraltar, y por pasiva en el de Ceuta y Melilla. Ya los ha tenido y es posible que siga teniéndolos en el futuro.

a) *En Gibraltar.* Su primer ministro Joshua Hassam se puso en pie "como un solo hombre" ante la reacción inglesa frente a la ocupación argentina. Gibraltar ha acompasado su paso corto al paso inglés, firme y decidido en su reacción. Estratégica y tácticamente era muy difícil la reconquista de las Malvinas, pero todavía era más difícil en el plano ideológico, por la posible carencia de ideales suficientes para mover esta masa de hombres y esta máquina de guerra. Inglaterra supo obtener la cuota de ideal suficiente para empeñarse en esta lucha, sin dejarse vencer por la modorra de unas inmediatas decisiones de "alto el fuego" y diálogo en las Naciones Unidas, pero estando las Malvinas en poder de los argentinos.

La victoria inglesa en las Malvinas tornó la tranquilidad a Gibraltar y hasta paradójicamente le proporcionó una segunda gran victoria, que fue la apertura de la "verja".

La "debacle" argentina en las Malvinas ha vigorizado el criterio inglés de la legitimidad de la posesión, que siempre ha de ser respetada, y el subsiguiente de la autodeterminación de los habitantes. Ha vigorizado el criterio inglés de legitimidad en su permanencia en el Peñón, desechando cualquier vestigio de temor acerca de una ocupación bélica por parte de España.

La victoria inglesa en las Malvinas y encima la apertura de la "verja" son dos acontecimientos tan felices e insospechados para los habitantes del Peñón que es de suponer que no se lo lleguen a creer. Con la apertura de la "verja" se abandonó una política lenta y minuciosa que estaba basada en un agudo estudio de los títulos de permanencia y posesión sobre el Peñón. La política que se canceló con la apertura de la "verja" era la política de Utrech, o sea, basada estrictamente en las estipulaciones del Tratado de Utrech, título de la posesión inglesa. Inglaterra anteponía frente a la endeble argumentación geográfica, que en el fondo bien poco dice, el viejo adagio internacionalista de "pacta sunt servanda". Los pactos no prescriben y el Tratado de Utrech, según Inglaterra, y tiene razón, está en vigor, tal como si hubiera sido firmado ayer mismo. Esgrimían el viejo pergamino por las cancillerías y lo blandían ante las barbas españolas.

La política española, galaicamente pensada, esgrimía otro aforismo latino frente al aforismo ya citado: "Summun ius, summa injuriae". Si hay Tratado, lo habrá hasta sus últimas consecuencias:

> "Pero para evitar cualesquiera abuso y fraudes en la introducción de las mercaderías, quiere el Rey Católico, y supone que así se ha de entender, que la dicha propiedad se ceda a la Gran Bretaña sin jurisdicción alguna territorial y sin comunicación alguna abierta con el país circunvecino por parte de Tierra".
>
> (Del artículo X del Tratado de Utrech, 1713).

Melilla. Monumento y Avenida del Generalísimo

En este punto se encuentra la base legitimadora del cierre de la "verja" y, como consecuencia, la imposición de una política de aislacionismo que dio resultado, a pesar del innegable tesón de los propios gibraltareños. La Colonia quedó circunscrita a una vida vegetativa y contemplativa, pendiente de la precaria vida de su arsenal de mantenimiento naval. Mientras tanto, la aplicación de un brillante Plan Económico para el Campo de Gibraltar conseguía sacar a esta comarca de su secular retraso. No hay más que comparar la actual Algeciras, con aquel triste pueblo, olvidado del mundo, que era no hace más de veinte años. Pese a todos los esfuerzos, no se consiguió hacer algo similar con la ciudad de La Línea de la Concepción, ciudad artificial, creada al cobijo de Gibraltar, dormitorio de sus obreros, y que, sin la protección de Gibraltar, poco tenía que ofrecer.

b) *En Ceuta y Melilla.* Para Ceuta y Melilla, la moraleja a deducir del episodio malvinés tiene también gran trascendencia e importancia.

A estas ciudades interesa enormemente el sostenimiento y ensanchamiento de la teoría de la legitimidad de la posesión de territorios segregados. Estos territorios pueden ser islas, archipiélagos o zonas continentales de mayor o menor extensión, pero siempre forman parte de la soberanía común. Y no hay ningún obstáculo para que esta soberanía se extienda con la misma forma, fuerza y naturaleza sobre cualesquiera de estos territorios, bien segregados, bien unitarios.

En el caso malvinés, las Naciones Unidas condenan la invasión argentina, y aunque hay intentos de "alto el fuego", se logra la reconquista inglesa y la opinión mundial se tranquiliza. La quieta y pacífica posesión de estas lejanas tierras, sobre las que Inglaterra extiende su soberanía, no puede ser atacada por medios directos. La posesión no puede ser atacada y, por lo tanto, siempre es defendible no sólo dialécticamente, sino también y por descontado con la fuerza de las armas.

Y esto es perfectamente admisible aun en el caso de que el territorio en cuestión pueda ser considerado por la metrópoli como "colonia", declarado como tal y mantenido en esta consideración. La "colonia", que es hoy día un concepto transitorio y sometido a purificación por procedimientos reglados internacionalmente, participa en esa quieta y pacífica posesión y recibe igualmente la soberanía de la nación metrópoli.

Y si en el caso de territorios poseídos en concepto de "colonia" esta materia de la intangibilidad de la posesión se ha mantenido firme y ha salido reforzada de la polémica militar, ¿cuánto más no saldrá reforzada en aquellos casos, como los de Ceuta y Melilla, en los que no se posee en concepto de "colonia", sino en concepto de "territorio común"?

La posesión siempre es sagrada y, como consecuencia, la soberanía también lo es. Cualquier modificación del "status" tiene que ser pactada, con las dificultades inherentes derivadas de la modificación de la Constitución. Y quien recibe una perturbación en su posesión, está legitimado para actuar inmediatamente a intentar reponer la situación previa, tal como actuó Inglaterra en el presente caso, ante la mirada neutral de las Naciones Unidas y contando con la benevolencia de sus aliados del Mercado Común, de la OTAN y sobre todo de Norteamérica.

Esta acción inglesa, tan nítida en sus contornos, tiene otra trascendencia importante para el pueblo español en relación con los territorios de Ceuta y Melilla. Debe servirle para animar una moral que con tristeza hay que señalar como muy deteriorada. La moral española en relación con este tema pasa por unos absurdos remordimientos o por unos complejos que habría que situar en tiempos pasados y con unas opciones políticas diferentes.

En el orden teórico, la situación de Ceuta y Melilla está tan alejada de caer en las redes polémicas de Marruecos, como lo podrían estar Albacete o Cuenca, con la salvedad de la proximidad geográfica. En el orden práctico, la distancia es todavía mayor, puesto que habrán de pasar muchos años para que la potencia militar de Marruecos pueda inquietar a España. Donde, sin embargo, no estamos bien situados es en el orden moral o de ideología. Como Abraham, alucinado por el mandato bíblico, dispuesto a entregar a su hijo ante Dios sin saber exactamente por qué, igual España, sin saber por qué, parece estar dispuesta a ofrendar estas ciudades ante la kábila marroquí.

Es necesario que España sepa y comprenda a estas ciudades. Que no se pregunte para qué les sirven, como si quisiera obtener una renta inmediata en dinero efectivo, algo así como se pretendía que fueran las "colonias" en el siglo pasado, de donde venían los coloniales y ultramarinos. ¿A qué territorio nacional se le pregunta por su rentabilidad? Si fuera por ello, habría que liquidar en almoneda más de media España, seca y mísera, que no renta nada, que no sirve para nada, pero que es España por los cuatro costados. Y aquella pregunta se hace de un territorio estratégicamente decisivo para la defensa del Estrecho y Sur de España y que contiene el segundo puerto español en movimiento de buques.

De la enseñanza de las Malvinas, España tiene que comprender que cualquier territorio legítimamente poseído es perfecta y válidamente defendible, no sólo en el campo dialéctico, sino también con las armas en la mano, que por desgracia suele ser la mejor manera de rubricar las propias tesis, incluso en este siglo. Es una postura perfectamente comprensible por las naciones de nuestro entorno, porque es hablarse en un lenguaje que ya comprenden.

Otro efecto de importancia que ha supuesto la solución de las Malvinas es la agudización de las reclamaciones marroquíes sobre nuestras ciudades de Ceuta y Melilla. Este efecto pasa precisamente por Gibraltar.

Efectivamente, Marruecos lanzó hace tiempo una doctrina, que sociológicamente ha sabido clavarse en muchas mentes vacilantes, y que estriba en unir inseparablemente los destinos de Gibraltar con los de Ceuta y Melilla, haciendo ver que cuanto más trabaje España por recuperar Gibraltar, más estará cavando su fosa en Ceuta y Melilla. Habría que ahondar en los sofismas que se encierran en esta comparación, que ha sido aceptada por muchos españoles, incluso por importantes dirigentes políticos, que son los primeros en rectificar estos conceptos cuando analizan detenidamente la situación al llegar al poder o al rozar sus proximidades.

Pues bien, al producirse la solución malvinesa, directa o indirectamente se suaviza la presión española e incluso se abre la "verja", por lo que la solución del contencioso gibraltareño se dilata y tiende a colocarse "ad calendas graecas". Esta nueva postura perturba gravemente la tesis marroquí, que comprende también que la solución de su contencioso queda descolgada indefinidamente.

De pasada, bueno es decir que en el argumento marroquí de la homologación de Ceuta y Melilla con Gibraltar se descubre pronto su falta de consistencia, al advertirse esta misma circunstancia, o sea, la de depender de España precisamente a través de la recuperación del Peñón. Si Marruecos tuviera verdadera conciencia de la justicia de su pretensión, nunca la habrían dejado en manos de una solución que ellos no controlan ni pueden controlar.

Si añadimos a esta situación dialéctica el hecho siempre vigente de las dificultades internas marroquíes, que no puede seguir aguantando por mucho más tiempo la insólita aventura del Sahara, ni su índice de miseria y hambre, ni el descontento de los cientos de miles de emigrantes marroquíes retornados de Europa que confrontan situaciones a un lado y otro del Estrecho, se comprenderá cómo de pronto, tras la misteriosa muerte de Dlimi, surge inopinadamente una nueva reclamación sobre nuestros territorios.

CONCLUSIONES

— Era muy acertada la postura española de "distinta y distante", porque desde su inicio, la invasión de las Malvinas iba a prejuzgar la situación de Gibraltar, si salía victoriosa la tesis inglesa, como así fue, y también iba a perjudicar dialécticamente la situación española en Ceuta y Melilla, si salía derrotada la postura inglesa. En el fondo de la definición española latía un deseo de que este acontecimiento no se hubiera producido.

— Pese a nuestro cariño racial por la Argentina y sin desconocer los derechos que pueda alegar sobre estas islas, la invasión no se debió haber producido; Inglaterra usó de su derecho a repelerla.

— La posesión de territorios geográficamente separados debe ser defendida por todos los medios; dialécticamente en el orden internacional y con las armas en la mano si es necesario.

— La voluntad determinadora de los habitantes de los territorios geográficamente separados sigue el máximo postulado para poder decidir sobre su futuro.

— Para Inglaterra sigue teniendo valor y consistencia el mantenimiento de su prestigio internacional, no admitiendo vejaciones como la sufrida en las Malvinas.

— Sigue siendo fundamental poseer el potencial bélico suficiente para poder repeler agresiones como la de las Malvinas, que pueden ser incluso producidas por pretendidas soluciones de problemas domésticos.

— En todo el concierto del Estrecho de Gibraltar existen unas claves de orden internacional a tener también en cuenta, pero que parten de las situaciones esbozadas y se aprovechan de ellas para reconducirlas a sus intereses.

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A LOS ANTIGUOS ALUMNOS DE LA ACADEMIA GENERAL MILITAR, 2.ª y 3.ª EPOCAS

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RIVISTA MILITARE May/Jun 83
(ROMA)

Il recente conflitto anglo - argentino per il possesso delle isole Falklands è stato oggetto, in questi ultimi mesi, di una vera e propria valanga di articoli, che si sono proposti di sviscerarne ogni singolo aspetto. Molto stranamente, però, scarsissima attenzione è stata dedicata ai combattimenti terrestri, quasi che la loro importanza potesse definirsi secondaria rispetto ai più rilevanti insegnamenti tecnici deducibili da una disamina complessiva della guerra, quali il peso della supremazia aerea, il nuovo ruolo svolto dai missili, e così via. Poiché – a nostro giudizio – si tratta di una prospettiva riduttiva ed errata, ci proponiamo, con il presente articolo, di porre l'accento sull'importanza decisiva dei combattimenti terrestri nell'economia del conflitto, ampliando la nostra indagine a tutti quei fattori che consentono, in ultima analisi, ai fanti di essere trasportati sui teatri di lotta e di sostenervi lo scontro.

La Rivista Militare ha pubblicato sul n. 2/83 l'articolo di un gruppo di lavoro di tre ufficiali, i quali hanno affermato che il conflitto delle Falklands non ha posto in discussione l'alternativa « esercito di mestiere o esercito di leva », ma ha invece sottolineato la necessità di disporre di uno strumento bene equipaggiato, ben addestrato e motivato.

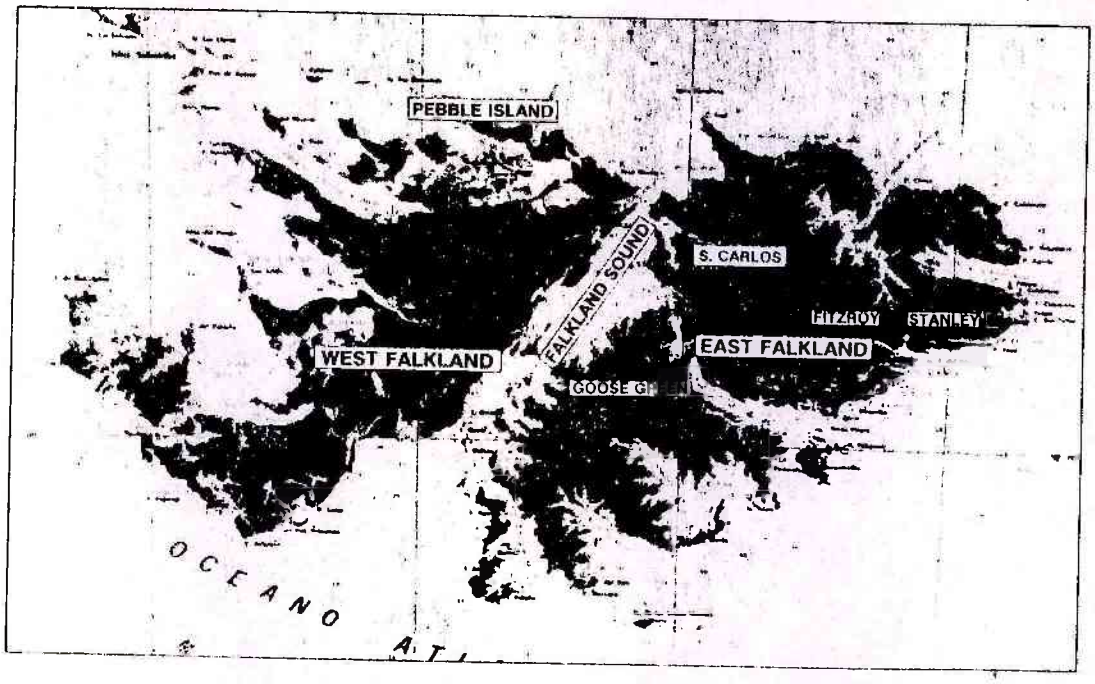
Di diverso avviso l'Autore del presente articolo, che esprime convinzioni personali quando parla di « trionfo del soldato di professione su quello di leva ».

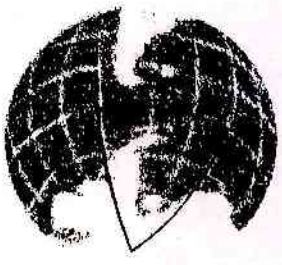
La Rivista Militare, per garantire al massimo l'obiettività dell'informazione, ha lasciato ampia libertà di trattazione ai suoi collaboratori ed ha pubblicato i due diversi punti di vista.

I COMBATTIMENTI TERRESTRI

I FATTORI CONDIZIONANTI

Il fatto di porre l'accento sull'importanza decisiva dei combattimenti terrestri nella guerra delle Falklands può apparire un'ottica riduttiva se posta a confronto con un'analisi del conflitto nel suo complesso, ma così non è se solo si riflette sul fatto che i nostri presupposti sono esattamente opposti a quelli dei molti commentatori che hanno scritto in merito alla guerra tra Gran Bretagna ed Argentina e che quindi intendiamo mettere in luce proprio quell'aspetto della lotta che finora è stato – a nostro avviso ingiustamente – trascurato. Sarà dunque perché se ne è già parlato a iosa che non ritorneremo sulla gravità della mancanza, da parte britannica, di portaerei degne di questo nome (1) e sulla conseguente inesistenza di una copertura aerea adeguata (2); sugli effetti perniciosi dell'indisponibilità, sempre da parte britannica, di velivoli imbarcati da sorveglianza elettronica; sulle perdite che tutto ciò ha comportato e sui rischi cui ha esposto le truppe di Sua Maestà prima, durante e dopo lo sbarco. Su questo – ripetiamo – si è incentrato fino ad oggi l'interesse dei critici, mentre altro è ciò di cui noi vogliamo parlare.





LA MOBILITAZIONE E L'APPARATO DI SOSTEGNO LOGISTICO

Esaminando i vari aspetti del conflitto, poco si è parlato della celerità della mobilitazione britannica, che invece ha avuto dello stupefacente. Non erano passati che pochissimi giorni dall'attacco argentino e già una potente *Task Force* era pronta a salpare. Poche settimane dopo, il dispositivo militare di Londra aveva rag-

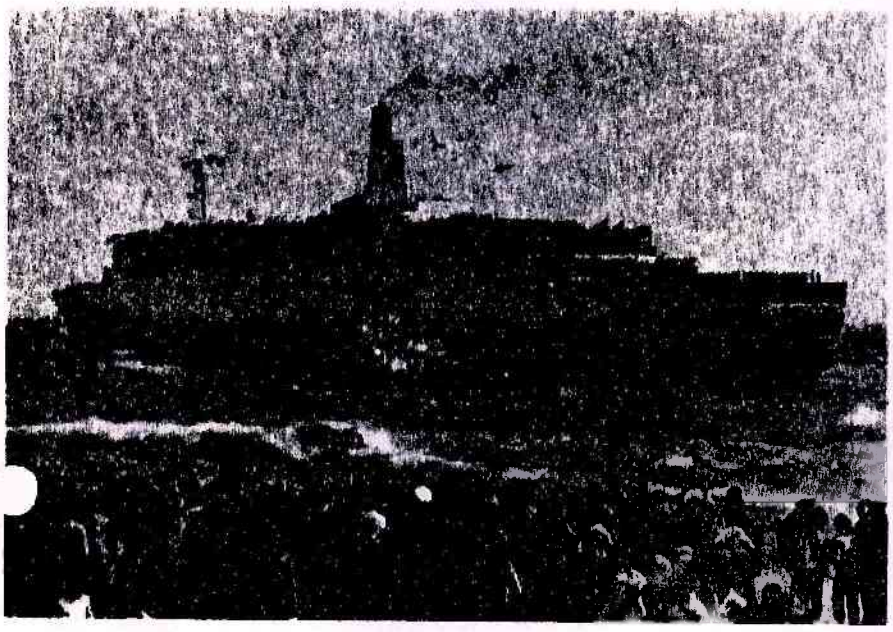
(1) Cfr. Ruggero Stanglini: « Falkland: le lezioni di una guerra inutile », in « JP 4 - Panorama Difesa », anno I, n. 1, ottobre - novembre 1982, p. 29.

(2) Cfr. Ezio Bonsignore: « Dure lezioni dall'Atlantico Meridionale », in « Rivista Italiana Difesa », anno I, n. 1, settembre - ottobre 1982, p. 77.

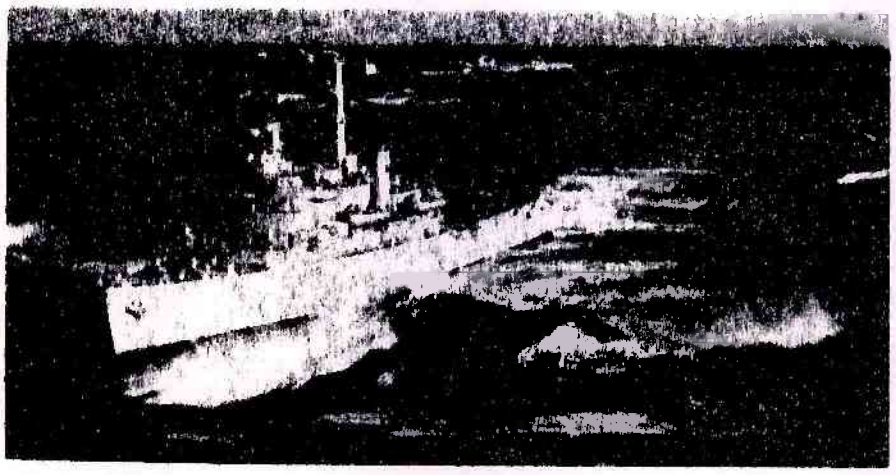
giunto il tetto delle 100 navi – di cui una sessantina di mercantili requisiti e rapidamente adattati ai nuovi compiti (3) – accompagnate da 50 - 60 aerei, un centinaio di elicotteri, e recanti a bordo circa 27.000 uomini. In sostanza, un'altissima prova di celerità, organizzazione ed efficienza, resa possibile soprattutto dalla natura totalmente professionistica dell'apparato militare britannico, costantemente pronto – come tale – all'impiego, anche nelle circostanze più difficili (4).

Non meno brillante è stato l'allestimento di un apparato di supporto logistico in grado di mantenere in mare la *Task Force* per quasi due mesi e poi sostenere lo sbarco e l'azione di circa 9.000 uomini. Si è trattato di un meccanismo organizzativo di prim'ordine, incentrato sull'isola di Ascensione, che è stato capace di assicurare il flusso ininterrotto dei rifornimenti tramite decine di convogli e persino di garantire la riparazione delle navi, degli aerei e dei mezzi danneggiati in combattimento. Senza tale struttura di base – e questo deve essere considerato un fattore di primaria importanza – il governo di Londra non avrebbe mai potuto pensare di risolvere con la forza una controversia svolgentesi a tante migliaia di chilometri di distanza dal territorio metropolitano. Nella flessibilità dell'apparato militare britannico e nella sua capacità di sostenersi all'altro capo del globo risiedono dunque due fattori fondamentali del successo dell'Inghilterra nel conflitto.

La partenza della V Brigata di fanteria a bordo della « Queen Elizabeth II », salutata dalla popolazione inglese.



L'unità d'assalto britannica « Intrepid ».

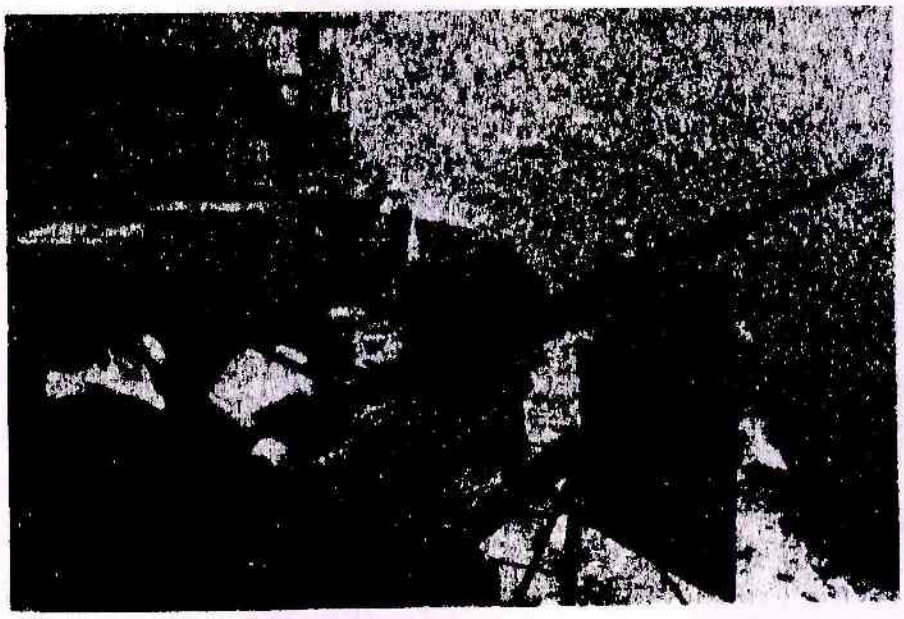


L'AZIONE DELLE FORZE SPECIALI

Fin dal primo momento – e cioè dal celere apprestamento della *Task Force* – si era evidenziata la volontà del governo inglese di ricorrere anche alla forza pur di giungere alla riconquista delle Falklands. Tuttavia, per circa un mese, la signora Tatcher non escluse la possibilità di addivenire ad una soluzione diplomatica della contesa. Quando però divenne chiaro che le trattative diplomatiche sarebbero andate per le lunghe, la « signora di ferro » decise – nell'imminenza dell'inverno australe – che la parola fosse lasciata alle armi. A quel punto, l'attività aeronavale fino a quel momento esplicata non era più sufficiente, ma si rendeva necessario uno sbarco onde riportare l'*Union Jack* sulle isole contese. Ebbero così inizio i preparativi per questa impegnativa operazione.

Gli argentini avevano organizzato la difesa delle isole in un modo alquanto rigido, concentrando le loro truppe nelle località principali (ed in particolare a Port Stanley) ed astenendosi dal pianificare una difesa elastica in corrispondenza dei tratti di costa più idonei ad uno sbarco, come sarebbe stato molto più opportuno fare. In ciò – a detta degli inglesi – era riscontrabile un indirizzo addestrativo nelle operazioni antisbarco assimilato dagli ufficiali argentini nelle scuole di guerra statunitensi. In esse, infatti, gli argentini avevano studiato principalmente le campagne condotte nel Pacifico nel corso dell'ultimo conflitto mondiale, durante le quali i *marines* americani furono più volte scagliati frontalmente contro i concentramenti di truppe giapponesi. Influenzato da questi studi, il comando argentino riteneva che gli inglesi non si sarebbero comportati in maniera troppo dissimile dagli americani, dimenticando che la storia della seconda guerra mondiale dimostrava a chiare lettere che la strategia britannica prediligeva una condotta delle operazioni più « obliqua », prece-

(3) Cfr. Ugo Mazza: « Falkland/Malvinas », in « Rivista Italiana Difesa », anno I, n. 2, novembre 1982, p. 52 sg.
(4) Cfr. Gen. D.A. Antonio Pelliccia: « La lezione delle Falklands », in « Rivista Italiana Difesa », anno I, n. 3, dicembre 1982, p. 27.



Posto di combattimento controaerei a bordo della « Hermes ».

duta da una sfibrante (per l'avversario) opera di logoramento (5). Al riguardo, la riconquista britannica dell'isola della Georgia del Sud avrebbe potuto costituire, per il comando argentino, un eloquente campanello d'allarme. Anche nella South Georgia, come nelle Falklands, gli argentini avevano concentrato le loro forze a difesa delle due località principali, Grytviken e Leith. Ma – e qui sta il punto – quattro giorni prima che una compagnia del 42° *Commando* dei *Royal Marines* sbarcasse, unità speciali britanniche erano già in azione sull'isola per saggiare la consistenza delle difese e la loro attività fu talmente devastante che gli argentini si arresero ancor prima che fosse lanciato un attacco convenzionale su più vasta scala (6).

La storia si ripeté anche per la riconquista delle Falklands vere e proprie. Nel lasso di tempo intercorrente tra l'arrivo delle unità navali in zona d'operazioni (20 - 25 aprile) e lo sbarco a San Carlos (21 maggio), gli inglesi fecero largo uso di reparti speciali sia per la raccolta di informazioni sulle forze e sullo schieramento avversari, sia per sottoporre le truppe argentine ad un costante logorio sul piano psicologico, compiendo atti di sabotaggio alle spalle della prima linea, lanciando incursioni in profondità ed attacchi repentini seguiti da altrettanto rapidi ripiegamenti in punti diversi della vasta linea costiera dell'arcipelago (7). Oltre agli scopi testé citati, queste incursioni si proponevano di colpire tutti quegli obiettivi che, per la loro natura, potevano mettere a repentaglio la sicurezza delle forze britanniche, di preparare il terreno ad uno sbarco e di mantenere la massima incertezza sul punto prescelto per lo stesso (8). Svolte in genere di notte da uomini addestrati ad agire in condizioni di alta ostilità e di elevata pericolosità, queste incursioni si dimostrarono estremamente fruttuose (9) e culminarono nell'attacco condotto da una cinquantina di uomini dello *Special Air Service* (SAS) contro le installazioni militari di Pebble Island (14 - 15 maggio), sulla costa settentrionale della Falkland occidentale. Colà era stanziato un consistente numero di aerei « Pucara », molto adatti alla lotta contro le truppe di terra e che quindi avrebbero potuto rappresentare un difficile ostacolo al momento di uno sbarco britannico in grande stile. L'attacco fu un completo successo e spianò la strada al successivo sbarco (10).

Il ruolo svolto dalle forze speciali nella strategia britannica ci induce a soffermarci su quest'ultima e – subito dopo – sulle unità che ne hanno resa possibile l'attuazione.

Il carattere sostanzialmente marinaro dell'imperialismo britannico e le sue dimensioni (almeno fino alla metà degli anni Cinquanta di questo secolo) mondiali hanno fatto sì che la potenza di Londra si esplicasse principalmente sul mare. La conquista vera e propria – quella esercitata con il dominio del terreno – era invece tradizionalmente affidata ad unità militari di consistenza modesta, che in genere si limitavano ad imporre la propria superiorità tecnologica all'avversario o – nel caso questi si fosse dimostrato un osso più duro del previsto – a far valere l'efficacia della propria grande professionalità. Del resto, gli impegni che Londra aveva in tutto il mondo e la stessa non macroscopica base di popolazione della madrepatria, uniti ad una marcata avversione del popolo inglese nei confronti di qualsiasi forma di obbligo militare generalizzato, rendevano costantemente assai modesto il numero di truppe di terra a disposizione. La seconda guerra mondiale, che la Gran Bretagna dovette combattere per un certo periodo in condizioni di marcata inferiorità, contribuì a far porre ulteriormente l'accento su due caratteri nazionali degli inglesi: l'individualismo e la mentalità sportiva. Fu da questo insieme di concause che nacquero la predilezione per una strategia « obliqua » – mirante a logorare il nemico prima di attaccarlo frontalmente e addirittura a cercare di fare in modo di non doverlo proprio attaccare in maniera tanto diretta – e l'utilizzazione di combattenti di prim'ordine in una guerra quasi privata contro l'avversario del momento; guerra fatta di colpi di mano, di *raids*, di incursioni; apparentemente quasi inutile, ma in realtà assai logorante (sul piano materiale come su quello mora-

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(5) Cfr. Carlo De Risio: « I 75 giorni delle Falkland », Mursia, Milano, 1982, p. 113.

(6) Cfr. Jim Graves, Bob Poos: « The Empire Strikes Back », in « Soldier of Fortune », dicembre 1982, pp. 75 - 77. Cfr. inoltre: « All'alba le bordate della flotta », ne « La Repubblica », 27 aprile 1982.

(7) Cfr. Christopher Dobson, John Miller, Ronald Payne: « The Falklands Conflict », Coronet Books, Londra, 1982, p. 162.

(8) Cfr. Ruggero Stanglini: « Falkland: le lezioni di una guerra inutile », cit., p. 37.

(9) Cfr. Matteo Spina: « Gli artigli del leone », in « Panorama », n. 841, 31 maggio 1982, p. 129.

(10) Cfr. Mario Ciriello: « Soldati inglesi sbarcano alle Falkland, fanno saltare dieci aerei e si ritirano », in « La Stampa », 16 maggio 1982.

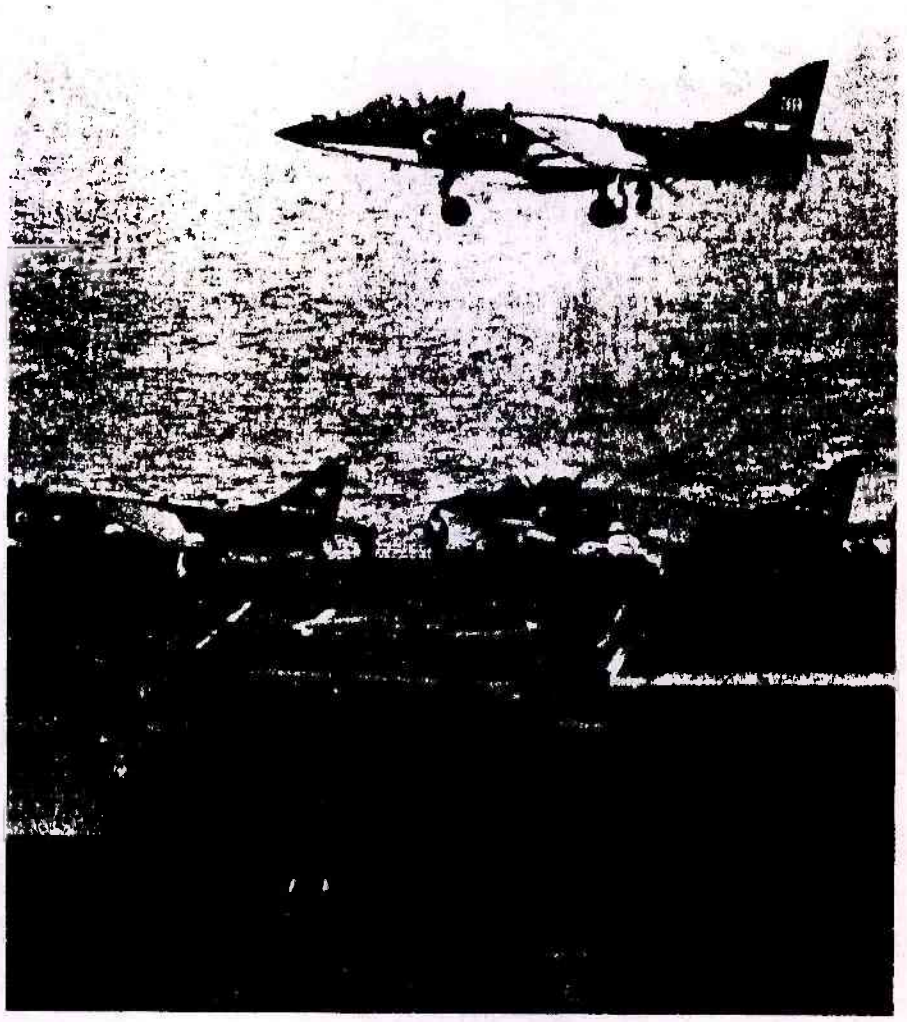
le) per il nemico. L'unità che meglio impersonificò questa filosofia operativa fu lo *Special Air Service* (SAS), nato nel 1941 per iniziativa di un ufficiale delle *Scots Guards,* David Sterling. Nel dopoguerra, il SAS ed il suo gemello, lo *Special Boat Squadron* (SBS), non furono disciolti, ma anzi continuarono ad essere concepiti come elementi essenziali della strategia « obliqua ».

Chiarito questo, ci sembra opportuno definire meglio i caratteri del SAS e dello SBS.

Il 22° *Special Air Service Regiment* è un'unità dell'Esercito britannico (11) cui è ufficialmente affidato il compito di effettuare « penetrazioni in profondità dietro le linee nemiche per missioni di sabotaggio e di ricognizione » (12). Reclutato tra i reggimenti d'*élite,* addestrato fino all'esasperazione (13), esso costituisce oggi una tra le migliori « unità speciali » del mondo, in grado di svolgere qualsiasi tipo di attività: dalla repressione del terrorismo, al sabotaggio, alla controguerriglia (14). Abituati ad agire in gruppi di quattro, gli uomini del SAS debbono essere considerati dei veri e propri superprofessionisti della guerra.

Accanto al SAS si colloca lo *Special Boat Squadron,* un'unità di arditi - incursori il cui personale è trattò, dopo una durissima selezione, dalle file dei *Royal Marines* ed il cui motto è – molto significativamente – *Not by strenght, it by guile* (« Non con la forza, ma con l'astuzia »). Si tratta di specialisti nelle azioni di infiltrazione dal mare e di sabotaggio, addestrati a lanciarsi da grandi altezze in caduta libera e ad aprire il paracadute solo a poca distanza dal pelo dell'acqua per evitare di essere individuati (15), nonchè in grado di fornire le più eclatanti prestazioni nelle condizioni più impensabili.

Quale miglior strumento, dunque, di queste due unità di prim'ordine per dare corpo alla strategia « obliqua » britannica per la riconquista delle Falklands? Chi meglio di loro avrebbe potuto spianare la strada al grosso del corpo di spedizione indebolendo nel contempo la difesa argentina? Tutte le operazioni di piccola e media entità antecedenti lo sbarco hanno posto in evidenza l'altissimo grado di specializzazione degli uomini del SAS e dello SBS. In proposito, anzi, è opportuno sottolineare che, nel corso del conflitto, allo SBS sono state affidate soprattutto missioni di ricognizione, mentre al SAS sono state affidate le incursioni vere e proprie. Ciò si è rivelato conforme alla natura delle due unità, ma non deve far pensare ad una specifica ripartizione di compiti. Più semplicemente, il comando britannico ha ritenuto il SAS più adatto a compiere operazioni del tipo che gli inglesi definiscono *bash and dash* (« colpire forte e darsela a gambe », equivalente dell'americano *hit and run*), vale a dire attaccare rapidamente, fare il maggior danno possibile, terrorizzare il nemico e sparire.



Velivoli britannici Sea Harrier a decollo verticale.

Non è facile valutare quanto l'azione delle unità speciali abbia influito positivamente sulle operazioni del corpo di spedizione britannico nel suo complesso, ma il fatto che abbiano costituito la « punta di lancia » delle truppe del generale Moore fino al giorno della conquista di Port Stanley sta a dimostrare che esse sono risultate all'altezza delle aspettative dei comandi. Gli argentini sono parsi aver trascurato questa componente essenziale della condotta di guerra britannica e ne hanno pagato pesantemente lo scotto. Pur senza volerne trarre

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(11) Per una storia completa del SAS, cfr. Tony Geraghty: « Who Dares Wins. The Story of the SAS 1950 - 1980 », seconda edizione, Fontana - Collins, Glasgow, 1981.

(12) Edgar O'Ballance: « Who Dares Wins. SAS versus Soldiers, Guerrillas and Terrorists », in « Soldier of Fortune », dicembre 1982, p. 81.

(13) Sull'addestramento degli uomini del SAS, cfr. Leroy Thompson: « SAS Today », in « Soldier of Fortune », dicembre 1982, pp. 84 - 86; nonché Tony Geraghty: « Who Dares Wins », cit., in particolare il capitolo 9, « How to Select an Elite », pp. 259 - 293.

(14) Cfr. « Incursori britannici a Stanley per distruggere i radar nemici », in « La Stampa », 6 giugno 1982.

(15) Cfr. « I leggendari incursori della Marina britannica », ne « Il Giornale nuovo », 27 aprile 1982.

conclusioni di carattere generale, è chiaro che le unità speciali hanno avuto un notevole peso sulla strategia inglese e si commetterebbe un errore analogo a quello commesso dagli argentini se si tendesse a sottovalutarne l'operato. Il conflitto delle Falklands, invece, ha dimostrato che le forze speciali continuano a svolgere un ruolo di grande rilievo nei metodi di lotta del *British Army*.

LO SBARCO

Una volta che le forze speciali avevano saggiato la consistenza delle difese argentine, incusso timore al nemico e raccolto tutte le informazioni necessarie, tutto era pronto per l'avvio di una operazione di sbarco su larga scala. A tal fine, il comando britannico aveva predisposto l'impiego di due Brigate, di cui una – la *Commando Brigade*, rinforzata da due battaglioni di paracadutisti e da altre unità minori – era imbarcata sulla nave passeggeri « Canberra » e sul traghetto « Norland », mentre l'altra – la V Brigata di fanteria, anch'essa rinforzata da unità minori – era partita più tardi verso la zona d'operazioni a bordo del transatlantico « Queen Elisabeth II » (vedasi la tabella A per un quadro completo delle forze da sbarco britanniche).

Di fronte alle truppe di Sua Maestà britannica stavano poco meno di 10.000 soldati argentini, dotati di una quindicina di carri armati AMX (di fabbricazione francese) e di altro materiale pesante (16). Di questi, oltre 6.000 erano concentrati intorno a Port Stanley, mentre 1.500 erano schierati attorno a Port Darwin ed un contingente di pari consistenza era preposto alla difesa di Fox Bay. Fatta eccezione per circa un migliaio di *commandos* della Marina, tutti gli altri erano elementi di leva, con il morale ormai a terra, stanchi per i gravi disagi cui erano sottoposti e non propriamente animati da un grande ardore combattivo.

Nonostante un sostanziale equilibrio numerico e nonostante gli errori del comando argentino, che aveva approntato una difesa rigida (e non elastica) delle isole, lo sbarco inglese si presentava come un'operazione di notevole difficoltà per il fatto che gli argentini potevano vantare una perfetta conoscenza del numero degli uomini impegnato nell'azione e prevedere senza troppa difficoltà la data della stessa, ma soprattutto perché all'indiscussa superiorità navale delle forze dell'Ammiraglio Woodward si contrapponeva una situazione di contrasto aereo favorevole agli argentini a causa del ridotto numero di velivoli imbarcati sulla « Hermes » e sull'« Invincible » (17). In pratica, lo sbarco inglese avrebbe dovuto svolgersi sotto la protezione di un ombrello aereo assai modesto e, quindi, in condizioni di estremo pericolo.

Malgrado l'esistenza di gravi e fondati fattori di rischio, il gover-

Tabella A

Unità di terra britanniche impegnate nella campagna delle Falklands

Comandante: Gen. Jeremy Moore
Commando Brigade (Brigadier Generale Julian Thompson)
Comando di Brigata

40° Commando del Royal Marines	**700 uomini**
42° Commando del Royal Marines	**700 uomini**
45° Commando del Royal Marines	**700 uomini**

Per l'occasione, ad essa erano stati affiancati il

2° Btg. The Parachute Regiment	**650 uomini**
3° Btg. The Parachute Regiment	**650 uomini**

nonché

2 squadroni del reggimento The Blues and Royals, della Cavalleria della Guardia, dotati di carri leggeri « Scimitar » e « Scorpion »;

inoltre

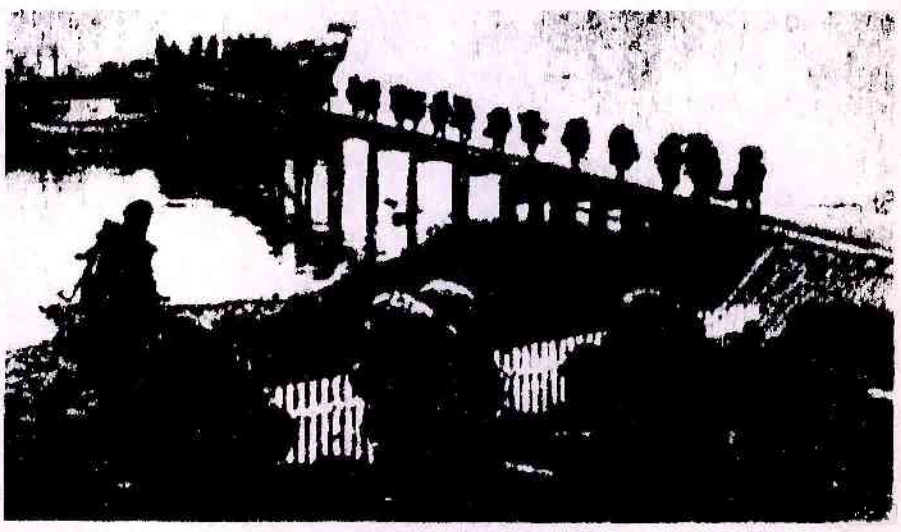
unità di difesa antiaerea dotate di batteria di missili antiaerei « Rapier »; varie altre unità di sostegno.

V Brigata di fanteria (Brigadier Generale Tony Wilson)
Comando di Brigata
2° Btg./The Scots Guards (Ten. Col. Michael Scott)
1° Btg./The Welsh Guards (Ten. Col. John Rickett)
1° Btg./7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles (Ten. Col. D.P. de C. Morgan)

Per l'occasione, ad essa erano stati affiancati il 9° Parachute Squadron del Royal Engineers
nonché varie altre unità di sostegno.

(16) Cfr. « Le forze in campo », in « La Notte », 22 maggio 1982.
(17) Cfr. Ugo Mazza: « Falkland/Malvinas », cit., p. 45.
(18) Cfr. Michel Colomes: « Malouines: récit », in « Le Point », n. 506, 31 maggio 1982, p. 66.

Soldati della V Brigata di fanteria sbarcati a San Carlos Bay.



no Tatcher ordinò egualmente l'avvio delle operazioni di sbarco e qui il comando britannico fornì veramente un saggio della propria perizia riuscendo fino all'ultimo ad ingannare gli argentini sulla zona prescelta per lo sbarco stesso. Questa fu la baia di San Carlos, all'interno del Falkland Sound, il braccio di mare che divide le due isole maggiori dell'arcipelago; esattamente alle spalle di Port Stanley, dove gli argentini si attendevano l'attacco. Port San Carlos fu scelto perché posto in un'insenatura particolarmente chiusa e dove il mare era di conseguenza assai più calmo; perché circondato da colline sulle quali sarebbe stato possibile impiantare immediatamente dei radar e delle batterie di missili terra - aria « Rapier », onde garantire al contingente di sbarco quella protezione contro gli attacchi dal cielo che si sapeva indispensabile a causa del ridottissimo ombrello aereo a disposizione della *Task Force* (18); infine perché si trattava di un punto d'approdo favorevole, ma non eccentrico in misura tale da non consentire una rapida puntata offensiva verso Port Stanley.

L'ordine di dare il via allo sbarco fu accolto con sollievo dai soldati imbarcati sulla nave « Canberra », poiché la lunga convivenza a bordo tra elementi di unità d'*élite* come i *Royal Marines* ed i paracadutisti era sfociata in sempre più frequenti risse ed atti di intemperanza tra uomini perfino troppo ansiosi di menar le mani. Così, nella notte tra il 20 ed il 21 maggio, il « Canberra », il traghetto « Norland » ed alcune unità d'assalto anfibio, scortate da 5 navi da guerra, entrarono nel Falkland Sound e poi si infilarono nello stretto budello della baia di San Carlos, dove il mare era assai più calmo che nel resto delle acque circostanti l'arcipelago, ma dove grande era il pericolo di attacchi aerei a causa della ristrettezza degli spazi di manovra a disposizione delle navi. D'altro canto, a seguito della mancanza di un numero sufficiente di grandi unità d'assalto anfibio e di piccoli mezzi da sbarco, era impossibile procedere allo sbarco contemporaneo di tutti gli uomini ed i mezzi. Perciò, fu necessario organizzare una serie di trasbordi ed una spola continua tra le navi e la spiaggia. In questo modo, furono sbarcati circa 2.500 uomini.

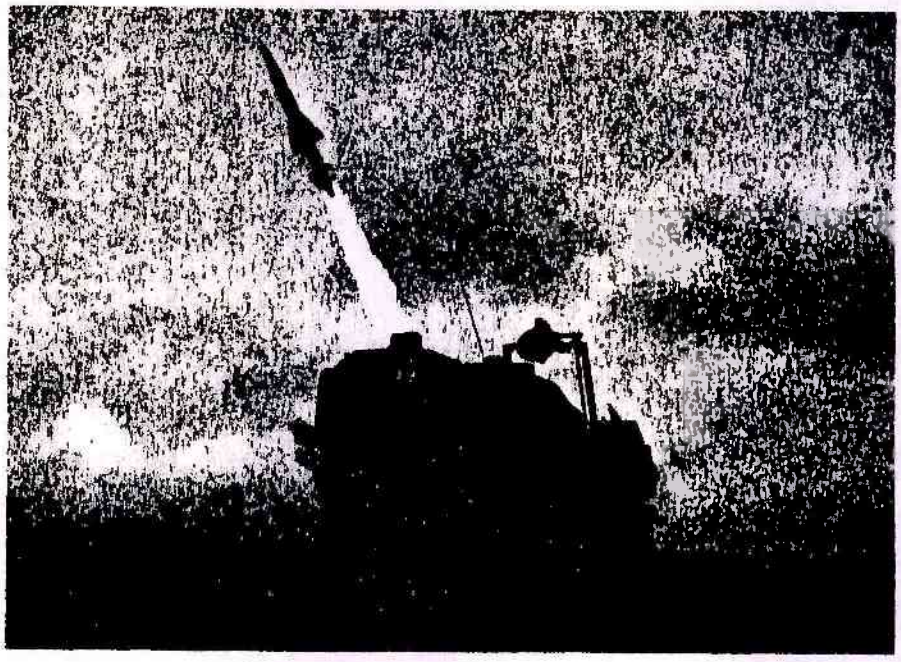
Tanto audace ed organizzata fu l'azione inglese, tanto confusa e tardiva fu la reazione argentina. Grandemente sorpreso dal fatto che lo sbarco non fosse avvenuto – come previsto – nei dintorni di Port Stanley (19), il comando argentino si dimostrò in un primo tempo incline a considerarlo una semplice operazione diversiva. Non fu intrapresa perciò alcuna azione terrestre per contrastare lo sbarco, in quanto ciò avrebbe potuto sguarnire Port Stanley ed il compito di attaccare la testa di sbarco venne lasciato tutto (e per di più tardivamente) sulle spalle dell'Aeronautica. Quest'ultima lanciò i suoi aerei all'assalto con grande determinazione e coraggio, ma anche con scelte tattiche assolutamente insensate, come il concentrare le incursioni contro le navi da guerra e non contro quelle da sbarco ed i trasporti truppe. Se così fosse stato, gli argentini avrebbero potuto infliggere alla forza di sbarco perdite tali da bloccare l'offensiva. Al contrario, mentre le navi di scorta subirono pesantemente l'effetto delle incursioni aeree, l'operazione di sbarco poté procedere senza incontrare particolari difficoltà. Inoltre, le perdite subite dall'aviazione argentina durante gli attacchi alle navi di scorta furono di gravità tale da scoraggiare la continuazione degli stessi nei giorni successivi. Di conseguenza, nella giornata del 22, il comando britannico – constatata la scarsa reattività degli argentini – decise di spingere a fondo l'azione sbarcando altri 2.500 uomini e grandi quantità di mezzi e di materiali, vale a dire l'intera *Commando Brigade* rinforzata.

Non appena lo sbarco fu completato, le truppe britanniche si preoccuparono di costituire un perimetro difensivo e di dotarlo di quella copertura antiaerea che era indispensabile per la continuazione delle operazioni. Vennero predisposte numerose postazioni dotate del sistema missilistico antiaereo « Rapier » e, a partire da quel momento, la testa di ponte britannica poté considerarsi fortemente consolidata. Lo sbarco a Port San Carlos è stato da molti giudicato una operazione da manuale (20), una delle più grandi operazioni anfibie del dopoguerra condotta con valentia da un apparato militare che in questo settore può vantare una lunga tradizione di capacità e di esperienza. Riteniamo di poter concordare in linea di massima con questo giudizio, ma non possiamo astenerci dal rilevare che si è trattato anche di un'operazione estremamente arrischiata, condotta senza un'adeguata copertura aerea e senza un sufficiente numero di navi idonee allo svolgimento di azioni anfibie. Della prima deficienza ab-

Posto di controllo dello « Sheffield », una delle unità perdute dalla marina britannica durante le operazioni.

(19) Cfr. Mario Ciriello: « Gettate altre due teste di ponte », in « La Stampa », 23 maggio 1982.

(20) Cfr. Enrico Jacchia: « Tra manuale e fantascienza », ne « Il Giornale nuovo », 23 maggio 1982.



Sistema controaereo britannico « Rapier ».

biamo già parlato; per quanto concerne la seconda, è indubbio che essa si è dimostrata assai grave, costringendo il governo britannico a ricorrere a grandi navi passeggeri per il trasporto truppe e poi a portarle in prima linea al momento degli sbarchi (esponendole quindi a gravi rischi) oppure a tenerle lontane dalla zona d'operazioni trasbordando le truppe su unità anfibie militari di più piccole dimensioni, con la conseguenza di allungare così i tempi delle operazioni e di aumentare il disagio degli uomini.

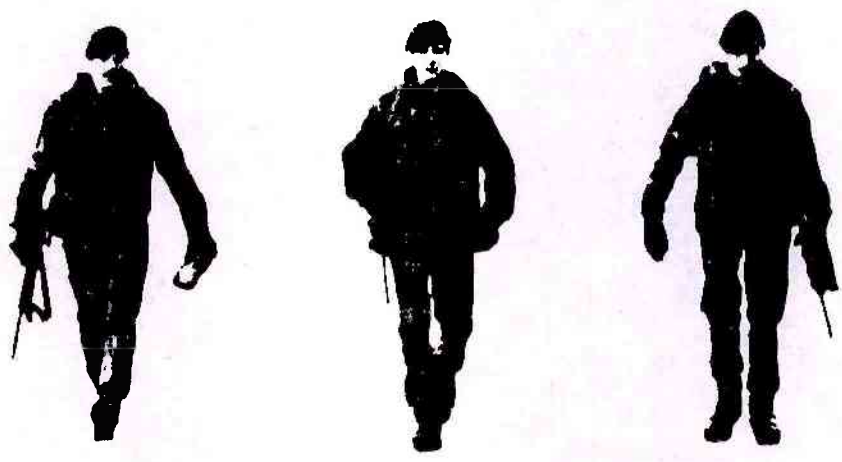
In pratica, le Forze Armate britanniche si sono trovate nella necessità di organizzare una complessa operazione di assalto anfibio a migliaia di chilometri dalla madrepatria disponendo di una sola nave atta all'uopo, la « Fearless », e richiamandone in tutta fretta in servizio una seconda, l'« Intrepid », già avviata al disarmo (21). Tale scarsità di mezzi ha influito non poco sull'ordinato sviluppo delle operazioni ed avrebbe potuto avere conseguenze assai gravi se gli argentini si fossero dimostrati avversari di maggiore consistenza. Com'è noto, la carenza di unità navali della *Royal Navy* deriva da una precisa scelta del governo a favore dell'armamento nucleare ed a scapito di quello convenzionale. Ritorneremo in seguito sull'importanza di questa scelta, ma deve essere chiaro fin d'ora che essa ha condizionato profondamente la condotta britannica della guerra, non solo dal punto di vista strategico, ma anche per quel che concerne la possibilità di dare corpo a tale strategia

LE OPERAZIONI TERRESTRI

Una volta posto saldamente piede a terra, il Generale Julian Thompson, comandante della *Commando Brigade*, avrebbe voluto prendere tempo per valutare la situazione, saggiare le reazioni degli argentini e soprattutto attendere lo sbarco degli uomini della V Brigata di fanteria, con l'ausilio dei quali l'offensiva avrebbe offerto ben maggiori garanzie di successo. La prudenza del Generale Thompson, tuttavia, non parve gradita al potere politico, il quale intensificò le sue pressioni affinché si procedesse alla riconquista delle isole nel più breve tempo possibile. Con ciò, il governo Tatcher dimostrava di paventare non soltanto le conseguenze che i rigori dell'inverno australe avrebbero potuto avere sulla condotta delle operazioni od i rischi impliciti in una lunga esposizione delle truppe e delle navi britanniche alle offese dell'aviazione argentina, ma soprattutto gli spazi che una condotta troppo cauta della campagna avrebbe aperto alle pressioni diplomatiche per il raggiungimento di una tregua (22). Di conseguenza, esso emanò l'ordine di intraprendere immediatamente l'avanzata verso Port Stanley senza

(21) Cfr. Ugo Mazza: « Falkland/Malvinas », cit., p. 51 sg.
(22) Cfr. Gino Bianco: « Londra: non torneremo più indietro », ne « Il Giornale nuovo », 24 maggio 1982.

Royal Marines.



attendere lo sbarco della V Brigata di fanteria.
L'avanzata verso la capitale delle Falklands ebbe così inizio lungo due direttrici: verso nord - est, lungo la rotabile (*Northern Route*) che conduceva a Port Stanley – distante un'ottantina di chilometri in linea d'aria da Port San Carlos – passando attraverso le località di Douglas e Teal Inlet; e verso sud - est, lungo l'altra rotabile (*Southern Route*) che portava a Stanley attraverso le località di Port Darwin e Goose Green. Entrambe le rotabili erano in realtà delle piste costruite su un terreno fradicio e – come tali – spesso impercribili, e proprio le condizioni del terreno ed il clima gelido ed ostile costituivano il vero ostacolo ad una celere avanzata, assai più che la resistenza degli argentini, fino a quel momento pressoché inesistente. In linea teorica, il comando britannico aveva previsto l'esecuzione di una *hop war*, cioè di una guerra condotta tramite successivi balzi in avanti eseguiti a mezzo di elicotteri; in pratica, però, i soldati inglesi erano stati costretti ad avanzare a piedi su un terreno impossibile, i *marines* lungo la *Northern Route* ed i paracadutisti lungo la *Southern*, poiché le condizioni metereologiche in genere impedivano l'impiego degli elicotteri.
Una volta iniziata, l'avanzata si era subito delineata come una manovra a tenaglia verso Port Stanley, effettuata in condizioni di estrema difficoltà lungo ambedue le sue direttrici: infatti, se la *Northern Route* si presentava in condizioni assai peggiori della sua consorella meridionale, era su quest'ultima che gli argentini avevano approntato i punti di resistenza più poderosi, specie in corrispondenza delle località di Port Darwin e Goose Green (23). Ciò era perfettamente naturale in quanto le due località si trovavano sulla stretta striscia di terreno che unisce le due parti principali della Falkland orientale e dunque costituivano un ideale punto di resistenza, che – tra l'altro – non poteva essere aggirato, in quanto i suoi fianchi erano entrambi protetti dal mare. La conquista di Goose Green, d'altra parte, era fondamentale per gli inglesi, dal momento che colà si trovava una modesta striscia aeroportuale, il cui possesso era ritenuto indispensabile per utilizzarla come base per gli aerei e contrastare in tal modo più efficacemente gli attacchi dell'aviazione argentina.
Il 28 maggio, dopo aver percorso circa 30 chilometri in un giorno ed una notte di marcia, i 650 uomini del 2° battaglione del *Parachute Regiment*, agli ordini del tenente colonnello Herbert Jones, si trovarono di fronte alle postazioni argentine di Port Darwin e Goose Green. L'avanzata era stata condotta totalmente a piedi perché le pessime condizioni meteorologiche avevano impedito qualsiasi appoggio da parte degli elicotteri e ciò aveva fatto anche sì che i parà si presentassero davanti al nemico con un'insufficiente dotazione di munizioni e soli tre cannoni per coprirli. Quantunque questa grande capacità di muoversi anche a piedi avesse colto di sorpresa gli argentini, l'attacco si presentava pur sempre come un assalto frontale in campo aperto contro un nemico superiore di numero e saldamente arroccato in posizioni prestabilite. L'opportunità avrebbe consigliato di rinviare qualunque movimento offensivo, ma gli inglesi avevano assolutamente bisogno di una vittoria che li rincuorasse e, nel contempo, demoralizzasse gli argentini e smorzasse la loro volontà di resistenza. Di conseguenza, l'ordine di attacco venne ugualmente impartito.
Port Darwin, il primo obiettivo, cadde senza troppa difficoltà, ma, mentre i parà proseguivano nell'avanzata, l'opposizione argentina si fece sempre più forte, poiché gli inglesi erano ormai entrati in contatto con la principale postazione difensiva nemica. Due mitragliatrici pesanti bloccavano ogni ulteriore avanzata e fu in quel momento che il Tenente Colonnello Jones ed il suo aiutante, Capitano David Wood, condussero personalmente un plotone all'attacco delle stesse. I due valorosi ufficiali furono uccisi nell'assalto, ma i paracadu-

Un Royal Marine di pattuglia nelle strade di Port Stanley.

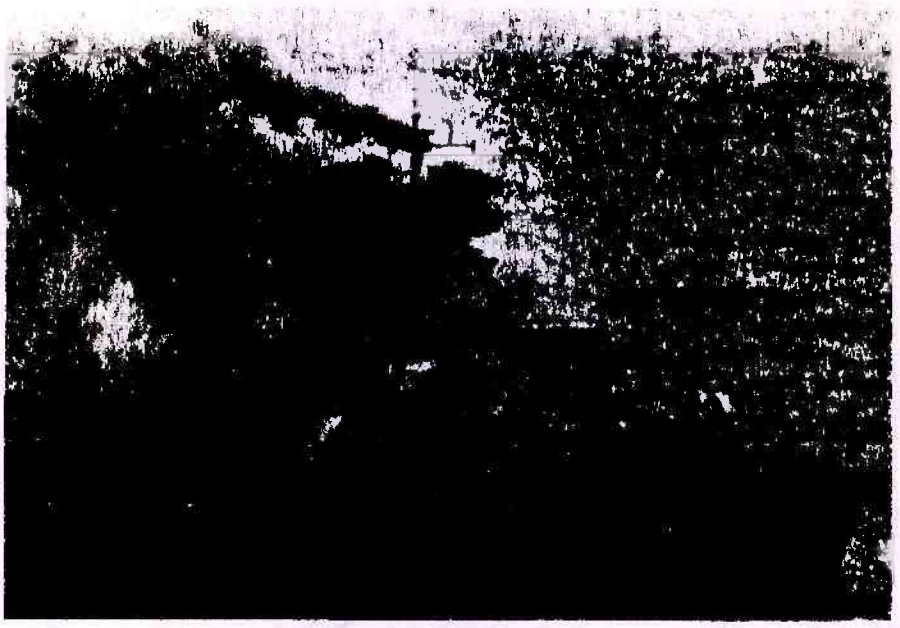
(23) Cfr. Mario Ciriello: « Avanzano i marines », in « La Stampa », 25 maggio 1982.

tisti furono trascinati da quella prova di valore al punto che le due mitragliatrici furono messe immediatamente a tacere. L'episodio segnò il momento di svolta dello scontro: la resistenza argentina, che fino a quel momento era stata molto decisa, crollò di schianto. Durante la notte, i soldati di Menendez rimasero imbottigliati a Goose Green e, il mattino successivo, si arresero.

Lo scontro era durato 14 ore ed era costato agli inglesi una quindicina di morti e poco più di trenta feriti; ben più alte le perdite argentine: circa 250 morti ed oltre 1.400 prigionieri. Per un battaglione di meno di 700 uomini, si trattava di una grande impresa, che – come annotò orgogliosamente la stampa inglese – andava ad iscriversi a pieno titolo nella brillante tradizione militare britannica. Le stesse perdite subite dal 2° battaglione, per quanto dolorose, erano inferiori a quelle subite nel 1979 dalla stessa unità a Warrenpoint, nell'Irlanda del Nord, dove in un'imboscata dell'I.R.A. erano rimasti uccisi 18 parà, tra cui un tenente colonnello.

La conquista di Port Darwin e Goose Green si rivelò vitale per il progresso delle operazioni britanniche: con essa, infatti, i paracadutisti avevano messo in funzione il braccio destro della tenaglia che doveva – per così dire – calare su Port Stanley; a nord, intanto, i *Royal Marines*, occupando quasi senza colpo ferire Douglas e Teal Inlet, avevano messo in funzione il braccio sinistro. Il cerchio intorno a Port Stanley poteva incominciare a stringersi.

Riesaminando lo scontro di Goose Green, il comando britannico ne approfittò per far tesoro di alcune preziose lezioni: in primo luogo, che le truppe argentine, anche se formate in prevalenza da giovani coscritti, potevano combattere bene se poste al riparo di posizioni prestabilite; in secondo luogo, che, sebbene affamate, esse erano ben fornite di armi e munizioni; infine, che probabilmente l'intera riserva strategica argentina – costituita da un battaglione di *marines* non di leva ma volontari – era stata gettata nella lotta e bruciata, cosicché il Generale Menendez si vedeva ora privato dei suoi uomini migliori (24). A ciò occorreva aggiungere la valutazione della scelta, ormai sempre più palese, operata dal comandante argentino a favore di una difesa statica concentrata intorno a Port Stanley. Nei giorni precedenti, non erano mancate agli argentini le occasioni per reagire, ma nulla era avvenuto. Menendez – questo l'interrogativo che assillava il comando britannico – stava agendo di testa sua, sbagliando, o stava applicando alla lettera le direttive, errate, che gli venivano da Buenos Ayres? Chiaramente, non sembrava molto desideroso di combattere in campo aperto ed anzi si era lasciato chiudere in un angolo dell'isola con il mare alle spalle. Ciò costituiva, a detta degli inglesi, la prova che aveva ormai acquisito una mentalità da assediato e di conseguenza aveva perduto ogni capacità di azione offensiva. Posto di fronte al dilemma di combattere od arrendersi – queste le conclusioni dei capi militari britannici – con tutta probabilità avrebbe combattuto solo fino al punto in cui l'onore militare l'avrebbe richiesto (25).



Lo « Sheffield » britannico dopo essere stato colpito da un missile « Exocet ».

Il 31 maggio, gli inglesi diedero inizio ai preparativi per l'assalto finale a Port Stanley attaccando il Monte Kent, un punto di osservazione chiave posto 10 miglia ad ovest della capitale delle Falklands. Dalla sommità di esso, ogni posizione argentina poteva essere osservata e, nel caso, bombardata; come tale, l'attacco rientrava nel disegno strategico inglese mirante alla conquista di tutte le alture sovrastanti Stanley al fine di poter piazzare le artiglierie e battere in tal modo le posizioni argentine intorno alla cittadina. L'occupazione del Monte Kent avvenne senza perdite per gli inglesi ed incontrò una resistenza molto scarsa.

Fino a quel momento, la condotta di guerra terrestre britannica si era proposta come obiettivo quello di sopperire all'inferiorità strategica con una marcata superiorità tattica. Lo scontro di Goose Green aveva rappresentato un'eccezione a questa regola, ma aveva anche sconvolto i rapporti di forza al punto che, dopo di esso e nell'imminenza dello sbarco e dell'entrata in linea degli uomini della V Brigata di fanteria, il Generale Menendez non disponeva di più di 6.000 o 7.000 uomini per la difesa di Port Stanley e dunque si trovava ormai in una condizione di inferiorità numerica anche sul piano globale. Ciò rendeva ancor più prevedibile l'esito dell'attacco finale.

Nei primi giorni di giugno, la spinta britannica contro le postazioni argentine si fece sempre più insistente: piccole puntate offensive alla ricerca dei punti deboli dello schieramento av-

(24) Cfr. Christopher Dobson, John Miller, Ronald Payne: « The Falklands Conflict », cit., p. 195.
(25) Cfr. « Op. cit. », p. 199.

versario, pressione propagandistica e psicologica, conquista di posizioni d'importanza essenziale ai fini dell'offensiva finale. In questa fase, il comando britannico sembrava fare molto affidamento sugli effetti psicologici di pesanti bombardamenti da terra e dal mare. Valanghe di proiettili erano fatte piovere non direttamente sul nemico, ma tutt'intorno alle sue postazioni, ad una distanza di pochi metri, sottoponendolo ad un'esperienza che soltanto soldati addestratissimi avrebbero potuto sopportare senza uscirne con i nervi completamente a pezzi (26). Ed i soldati argentini, per verità, non sembravano affatto di quella tempra; quasi tutti giovani di leva inesperti e privi di addestramento, erano per di più guidati da ufficiali tanto presuntuosi quanto incapaci, il che non poteva non incidere sulla loro efficienza complessiva.

In quegli stessi giorni, ebbe luogo lo sbarco degli uomini della V Brigata di fanteria. Malgrado l'operazione fosse contrassegnata – l'8 giugno – da un riuscito attacco dell'Aeronautica argentina alle navi anfibie «Sir Galahad» e « Sir Tristram », che trasportavano i soldati del 1° battaglione delle *Welsh Guards* – attacco che costò agli inglesi oltre 50 morti – essa nel complesso ebbe successo. A quel punto, con le guardie scozzesi e gallesi ed i Gurkha ormai sbarcati, il Generale Moore poteva godere anche della superiorità tattica. Ciò stava a significare che l'inizio dell'offensiva finale era questione di giorni, se non di ore.

Dopo la battaglia notturna per la conquista dei rilievi ad est di Stanley (Mount Harriet, Two Sisters, Longdon), l'occupazione delle alture circostanti la capitale delle Falklands poteva dirsi completata. Tuttavia, a causa della mancanza di elicotteri – buona parte dei quali erano andati perduti nell'affondamento del mercantile *Atlantic Conveyor* – ci volle un giorno intero perché le truppe britanniche potessero attestarsi saldamente sulle nuove posizioni, spostando nel contempo avanti i cannoni e rifornendoli adeguatamente di munizioni. Del resto, l'esperienza di Goose Green aveva insegnato ai comandanti inglesi che un ampio appoggio d'artiglieria era indispensabile se non si volevano costringere gli uomini ad audaci quanto rischiosi attacchi allo scoperto (27).

Fatto questo, l'offensiva finale poteva scattare. Nella notte tra l'11 ed il 12 giugno le truppe inglesi si lanciarono in avanti: il perimetro difensivo argentino fu sfondato e i soldati di Sua Maestà penetrarono in profondità nello schieramento nemico. Nelle prime ore del giorno 14, poi, i britannici assestarono il colpo di grazia all'ormai vacillante presidio argentino: Mount Tumbledown e Wireless Ridge, gli ultimi due perni della difesa argentina, crollarono di schianto sotto gli attacchi delle *Scots Guards* e dei Gurkha. Con ciò, i soldati inglesi si vennero a trovare a soli 3 km dalle prime case di Port Stanley. Il ripiegamento ordinato dal Generale Menendez verso l'aeroporto fu soltanto un gesto, l'ultimo, prima di avviare i negoziati di resa. Alle ore 21 (ora locale) di quello stesso giorno venne firmata la dichiarazione di resa della guarnigione argentina. La guerra delle Falklands era terminata. (Vedasi la tabella B per un quadro delle perdite subite dall'Esercito britannico nel corso del conflitto).

GLI INSEGNAMENTI DELLA GUERRA

Il trionfo del professionismo

« Gli inglesi hanno vinto solo perché i loro soldati – lo scalino più basso della struttura militare – sono stati maledettamente in gamba ». Il complimento viene dal Generale dei *Marines* americani James Soper, il quale ha giustamente sottolineato che non sono stati i più moderni ritrovati della tecnologia militare a mettere con le spalle al muro la guarnigione argentina, bensì le truppe inglesi, giovani volontari di 20 anni (ed anche meno), comandati da sergenti di 25, comandati a loro volta da colonnelli di 40. Un esercito di professionisti ben equipaggiati ed addestrati ha avuto la meglio su un contingente più numeroso ma meno preparato e meno motivato, composto

(26) Cfr. Mario Ciriello: « I settemila senza scampo: "Li prenderemo per paura" », in « Stampa Sera », 24 maggio 1982.

(27) Cfr. « Abbiamo vinto così. Jeremy Moore intervistato da Robert Fox », in « Panorama », n. 851, 9 agosto 1982, p. 107.

Tabella B

Perdite subite dall'Esercito britannico nel corso della guerra

Esercito	**124 morti**
Marina	**85 morti**
Royal Marines	**26 morti**
Aeronautica	**1 morto**
Altri	**19 morti**
Totale	**255 morti**

Fonte: Edward Fursdon: « 17 - Year - Old Paras Died in Action », in « The Daily Telegraph », 19 giugno 1982.

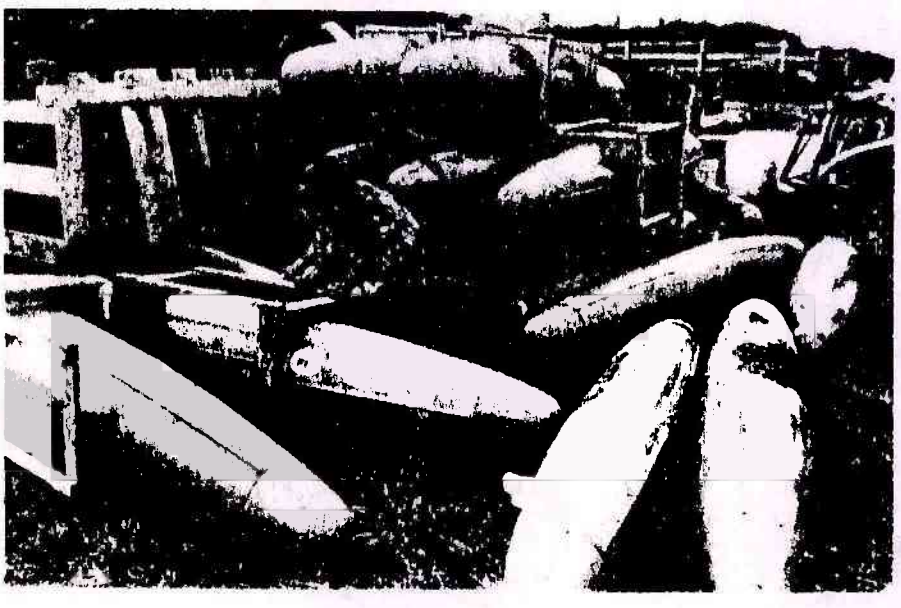
Carro leggero « Scorpion », armato con cannone da 76 mm.

in larga parte da elementi di leva (28).
Trionfo del soldato di professione su quello di leva, dunque, ma per quali motivi?
In primo luogo, perché la guerra delle Falklands, che – per le sue modeste dimensioni – ha richiamato alla memoria i conflitti del XVIII secolo, combattuti da nuclei ristretti di soldati di professione, si prestava più di altre all'impiego di elementi di mestiere, almeno fino a che le sue dimensioni non si fossero ampliate.
In secondo luogo, perché l'atteggiamento dei professionisti britannici nei confronti della guerra era assai diverso da quello delle reclute argentine. Al di là degli infingimenti retorici e delle dichiarazioni di prammatica, la parte più consapevole dei soldati di mestiere guarda alla guerra con la stessa disposizione d'animo con cui, nel romanzo di Buzzati, gli ufficiali della fortezza Bastiano guardavano alla venuta dei tartari dal deserto: la teme, ma – almeno fino a quando non l'ha assaporata un po' – anche l'attende. Se poi arriva davvero, ecco il morale altissimo, l'attesa impaziente di buttarsi sul nemico e di menar le mani (29). Ben diverso invece è l'atteggiamento del soldato di leva, il quale, per quanto animato dal più vivo sentimento nazionale, è pur sempre un civile catapultato – spesso in fretta e furia – nel grande crogiuolo di una guerra. E là, a contatto con una realtà come minimo traumatica, le sue reazioni sul piano pratico sono sovente difformi dalle sue intenzioni su quello teorico, con risultati di frequente assai negativi.
In terzo luogo, per gli apporti dell'esperienza. Non solo perché il soldato di mestiere può vantare – specie se è in servizio già da qualche anno – una maggiore esperienza rispetto ad uno di leva, ma anche e soprattutto perché l'esercito professionistico inglese può vantare, da questo specifico punto di vista, l'insostituibile esperienza che i suoi soldati hanno fatto e fanno nell'Irlanda del Nord. Al riguardo, tutti i commentatori sono stati concordi nel sottolineare il valore dell'esperienza fatta dai giovanissimi soldati britannici nell'Ulster, dove essi hanno imparato, talvolta a loro spese, la differenza che passa tra la teoria delle esercitazioni e la realtà di una guerriglia ove spesso e volentieri fischiano nugoli di pallottole (30). E di questa esperienza, ovviamente, essi alle Falklands hanno fatto tesoro.
In quarto luogo, perché la professionalità, l'addestramento, la qualità e le stesse motivazioni di un esercito di mestiere sono indubbiamente superiori a quelle di un esercito a coscrizione obbligatoria. Si tratta di peculiarità che si ottengono con un lungo e duro lavoro ed a caro prezzo, ma che poi, sul campo, si dimostrano paganti. E' chiaro che il governo di Londra aveva schierato alle Falklands unità dalle caratteristiche eccezionali, in cui ogni uomo rappresentava il risultato di mesi, anni di addestramento ed era guidato da ufficiali che godevano di indiscusso prestigio ed autorità nell'ambito di unità animate da un altissimo spirito di corpo in conformità ad una tradizione militare molto antica e consolidata.
Naturalmente, quanto testé affermato ci conduce direttamente – e siamo al quinto ed ultimo punto – al rapporto intercorrente tra esercito e società. Se questo è attivo ed operante – come in Gran Bretagna – se la suddivisione dei ruoli è netta, le Forze Armate si prepareranno con grande consapevolezza e senso di responsabilità a svolgere i loro compiti d'istituto (31). In caso contrario, il sistema militare o le sue scelte riveleranno le deficienze del sistema politico - istituzionale nel suo complesso. E' il caso per l'appunto dell'Argentina, dove la giunta militare al potere ha inviato coscritti giovanissimi e per nulla preparati alle Falklands ed ha tenuto in patria le unità d'*élite* – come le truppe andine, adatte al clima rigido delle Malvine – perché non poteva rischiare di allontanare dalla madrepatria quei reparti scelti che avrebbero dovuto innanzitutto servire a proteggere la giunta stessa. Una logica perversa, che è costata a Galtieri ed ai suoi la poco gloriosa difesa delle isole (32).
Trionfo del professionismo, dunque, ma nel contesto di una valutazione globale che deve tenere conto anche di alcuni fattori specifici.

Il fattore materiale

Dal punto di vista materiale, la parte terrestre della guerra delle Falklands è stata dominata dall'artiglieria, dagli elicotteri e dai missili antiaerei.

Un ufficiale della RAF ispeziona bombe al napalm catturate agli argentini.



(28) Cfr. Ruggero Stanglini: « Falkland: le lezioni di una guerra inutile », cit., p. 38.
(29) Cfr. John Whiterow: « Gioia sull' " Invincible ": " Finalmente si spara " », in « La Stampa », 27 aprile 1982.
(30) Cfr. Bruce George, Michael Coughlin: « British Defence Policy after the Falklands », in « Survival », vol. XXIV, n. 5, settembre - ottobre 1982, p. 205 sg.
(31) Cfr. Gen. Luigi Caligaris: « Luci ed ombre della macchina militare britannica », in « Politica Militare », anno IV, n. 13, luglio - agosto 1982, p. 93.
(32) Cfr. Carlo De Risio: « I 75 giorni delle Falkland », cit., p. 137 sg.

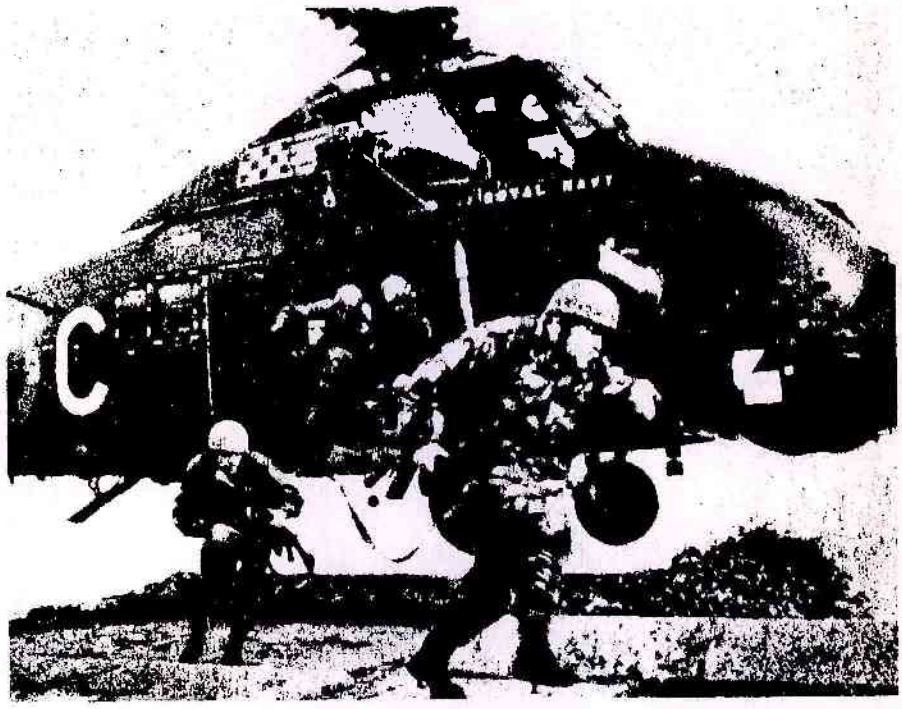
Il pezzo da 105 mm, plurimpiego realizzato in Italia dalla Oto Melara, si è dimostrato particolarmente idoneo ad operare su terreni accidentati, nonché efficace nel tiro campale come in quello controcarri. Il largo uso dell'artiglieria ha richiesto un corrispondente impiego di munizioni e ciò ha evidenziato l'importanza degli elicotteri nella funzione di trasporto. Purtroppo, le proibitive condizioni climatiche hanno grandemente limitato l'utilizzazione di questo mezzo, il che, tuttavia, non ha fatto che risaltarne ancor più l'insostituibilità. Dell'efficacia dei missili antiaerei « Rapier » si è già parlato e quindi non è il caso di ritornarvi su, mentre è opportuno ricordare le ottime prestazioni fornite dai carri leggeri « Scorpion » e « Scimitar ».

In campo inglese, anche l'apparato logistico si è dimostrato alquanto efficace, nonostante le difficili condizioni in cui si è trovato ad operare. Lo stesso non si può dire per il sistema logistico argentino, che ha fatto affluire sull'isola grandi quantità di materiale in modo caotico e poi non è stato in grado di organizzare un efficace sistema di distribuzione, per cui, mentre gli inglesi hanno poi ritrovato grandi magazzini di viveri, munizioni e parti di ricambio, durante la campagna i soldati argentini patívano la fame ed erano privi di munizioni, mentre i mezzi si fermavano per guasti e per mancanza di carburante.

Per quanto riguarda infine l'armamento in dotazione agli argentini, esso era ricco e di buon livello, ma non sembra che si sia dimostrato efficace quanto la sua controparte britannica, forse anche per l'insufficiente addestramento tecnico degli addetti.

Il fattore umano

Quanto affermato nel paragrafo precedente ci porta inevitabilmente a privilegiare il fattore umano: la guerra è stata soprattutto uno scontro di fanterie ed in essa fondamentale è stato il ruolo svolto dai fanti britannici (33). Ad essi deve essere attribuito il merito principale del successo, derivante dalla capacità di muoversi di giorno e di notte sui terreni più impervi e nelle condizioni climatiche più difficili, con una resistenza fisica tale da garantire loro la capacità di lanciarsi all'attacco anche dopo lunghe ed estenuanti marce (34), cogliendo gli argentini di sorpresa.



Naturalmente, non tutte le cose sono andate per il verso giusto, poiché ad esempio l'impiego della V Brigata di fanteria ha provocato complicazioni e difficoltà non previste. Per quanto formata da elementi d'*élite* come le Guardie ed i Gurkha, questa Brigata ha pagato lo scotto di essere costituita da soldati – nella fattispecie le Guardie – che avevano passato gran parte degli ultimi mesi impegnati nei servizi di gala a Buckingham Palace, trascurando necessariamente l'addestramento. Inoltre, per sua stessa destinazione specifica, essa non era addestrata a combattere in condizioni climatiche proibitive come lo sono i *Royal Marines* e, ancor più, gli uomini del SAS e dello SBS. Questi ultimi si sono avvalsi del loro addestramento di altissimo livello, mentre i *Booties* (nomignolo con cui in genere si designano i *Royal Marines*) si sono dimostrati perfettamente all'altezza della situazione anche perché il loro addestramento a livello NATO si svolge abitualmente in Norvegia, dove prevalgono condizioni climatiche non dissimili da quelle riscontrabili alle Falklands. In tal modo, essi si sono rivelati preziosissimi, ma, dopo tutto, quello era proprio il tipo di guerra per il quale si erano preparati a combattere. I paracadutisti, dal canto loro, per quanto non specificatamente preparati a combattere in un ambiente come quello delle Falklands, hanno sopperito a tale carenza addestrativa con un'aggressività ed uno slancio all'altezza delle loro migliori tradizioni.

Può essere utile anche sottolineare il fatto che la lunga campagna ha provocato il divampare di non pochi contrasti tra le varie armi, in particolare tra la Marina e l'Esercito, accusata da quest'ultimo di tenersi troppo lontana dall'arcipelago e di aver addossato sulle sue spalle – esaurita la semplice funzione di tra-

Il Gen. Julian Thompson, comandante della « Commando Brigade ».

(33) Cfr. Massimo Conti: « Il ritorno del fante », in « Panorama », n. 843, 14 giugno 1982

(34) Cfr. « Thompson: perché preferivo la notte », in « Panorama », n. 851, 9 agosto 1982, p. 104.

sporto delle truppe – l'intero onere dell'impresa. Naturalmente, si è trattato di un'accusa infondata, ma è significativo notare come una guerra abbia funto ancora una volta da catalizzatore di questi contrasti interarma, tanto meschini quanto perniciosi.

Per quel che concerne infine le truppe argentine, è necessario tenersi lontani dalle troppo facili generalizzazioni. Infatti, contrariamente a quanto è stato spesso affermato, la componente professionale dell'Esercito, della Marina e soprattutto dell'Aeronautica si è dimostrata di livello buono e talvolta ottimo; ma essa è stata pesantemente condizionata in senso negativo dalla massa di elementi di leva di cui si è circondata. Costoro, impreparati, sfiduciati, poco disposti al benché minimo impegno, talvolta parevano addirittura ignari di dove si trovavano. Pessime truppe queste ultime, dunque, ma anche comandate da ufficiali la cui presunzione era pari soltanto all'inefficienza, in un contesto di povertà concettuale ed organizzativa difficilmente eguagliabile.

Da parte inglese, un osservatore acuto (35) ha avuto addirittura l'onestà intellettuale di ammettere che, se gli argentini avessero trasportato alle Falklands truppe scelte e non coscritti, ben difficilmente il ritorno offensivo britannico avrebbe avuto successo. Non ce la sentiamo di condividere una affermazione tanto netta, se non altro per il fatto che la guerra ha dimostrato tutta l'efficienza e la professionalità della macchina militare britannica – dalla sagacia dei comandi, all'intelligente azione dei Quadri intermedi, allo spirito di sacrificio dei soldati – ma il dubbio è lecito e non totalmente infondato.

CONSIDERAZIONI CONCLUSIVE

Quanto abbiamo affermato nel paragrafo precedente contiene già in sè delle conclusioni ed altre indurrebbe a trarne. Ci sembra però più opportuno non limitarci a conclusioni di carattere settoriale, ma sforzarci di pervenire ad altre di carattere più generale, nell'intento di fornire una valutazione globale del conflitto.

In primo luogo, noteremo allora come la guerra delle Falklands sia stata un evento bellico che si è costantemente mantenuto entro limiti precisi – codificati, si potrebbe dire – ed è risultato perciò caratterizzato da quella che, con Schmidt, si potrebbe definire una inimicizia relativa. Questa mancata ascesa verso gli estremi è stata certamente facilitata dalla sostanziale modestia delle questioni sul tappeto e dal fatto che si sono trovate di fronte le Forze Armate di due paesi appartenenti, con sfumature diverse, all'area occidentale, ma non per questo è meno apprezzabile, se non altro perché ha dimostrato che anche nel XX secolo è possibile condurre una guerra che non sia totale se solo si riconoscono le ragioni dell'avversario, nonché la legittimità del suo governo e dei suoi comportamenti. E' un insegnamento – ripetiamo – da prendere con le molle in quanto emergente in un contesto abbastanza specifico, tuttavia sarebbe errato sottovalutarlo.

La stretta di mano dopo la firma della resa.

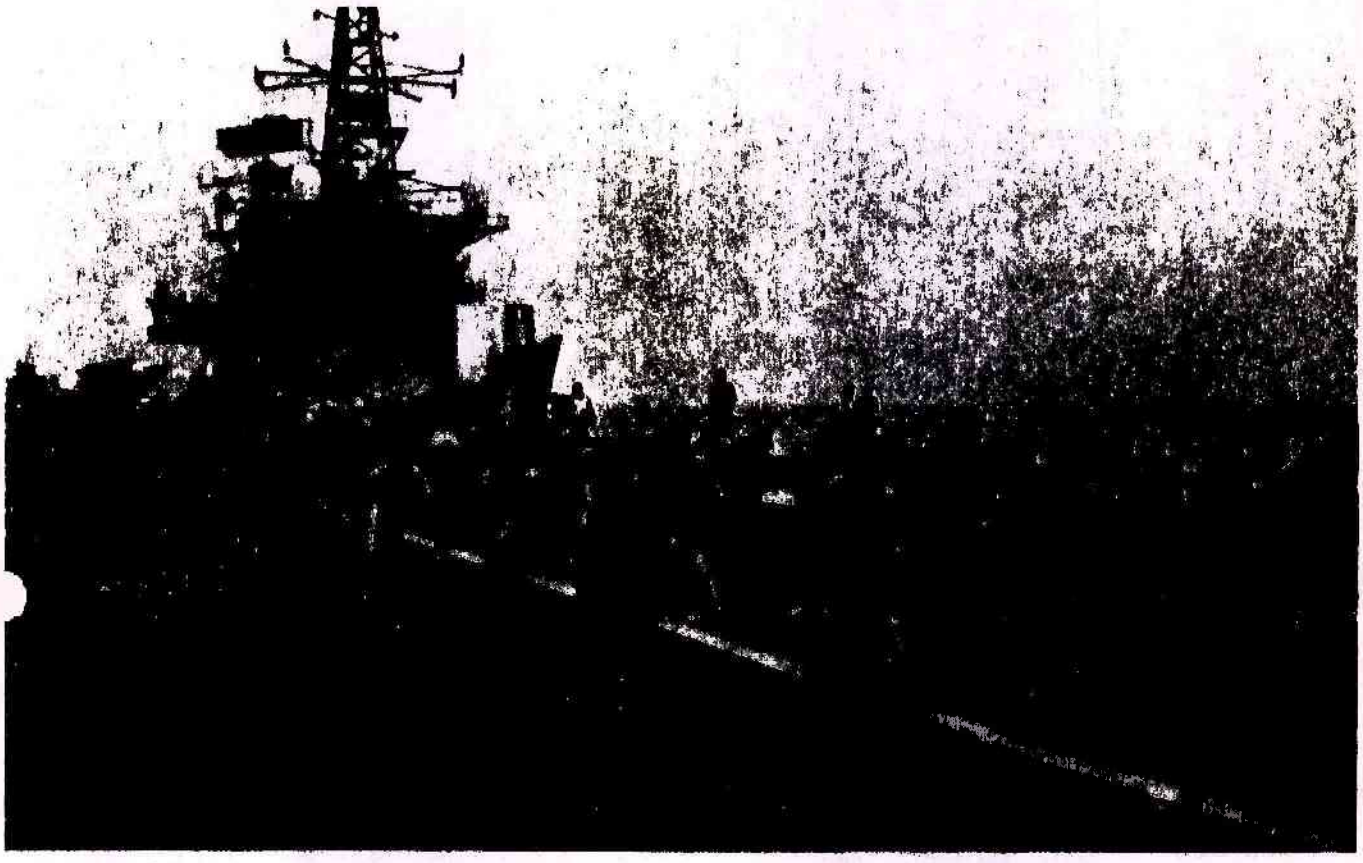
In secondo luogo, il conflitto anglo - argentino ha sottolineato il grande valore, in una guerra, di una perfetta organizzazione (36). Al riguardo, la macchina militare britannica si è messa in funzione e si è mossa come un organismo perfettamente oliato, mentre quella argentina ha lasciato molto a desiderare. Poiché la guerra è oggi più che mai un perfetto coordinamento di azioni complesse, in cui il ruolo del singolo viene esaltato quando la sua professionalità è inserita in un contesto armonico e funzionale, gli inglesi si sono dimostrati consapevoli di questa realtà e capaci di sfruttarla nel migliore dei modi. Altrettanto non si può dire per gli argentini, poiché, nelle loro Forze Armate, non appena l'azione, da individuale (ad esempio quella magnifica dei piloti), diventava collettiva, ecco che tutto il loro apparato entrava in crisi, in quanto l'impegno e la professionalità dei singoli non erano canalizzati entro strutture tali da trasformare l'efficace azione individuale in una valida azione collettiva (37). Una limitazione pobabilmente insita nel carattere nazionale e che ha influito molto negativamente sugli esiti del conflitto.

In terzo luogo, la guerra ha posto in evidenza il valore della *leadership*, a tutti i livelli, e delle *decisioni* che ne conseguono. Com'è noto, la Gran Bretagna è stata colta di sorpresa dall'attacco argentino, ma ha saputo incassare il colpo e poi reagire con grande *determinazione*, una determinazione che da tempo non si riscontrava nelle azioni politico - militari di un paese occidentale, che non è mai venuta me-

(35) Cfr. John Shirley: « The Heroes and the Horror », in « The Sunday Times », 20 giugno 1982.

(36) Cfr. Enrico Jacchia: « Il coraggio non basta », ne « Il Giornale nuovo », 5 giugno 1982.

(37) Cfr. Ugo Mazza: « Falkland/Malvinas », cit., p. 53.



Addestramento di Royal Marines a bordo della « Hermes ».

no e che era ravvisabile in egual misura tanto nel governo e nel popolo britannico quanto negli uomini della Task Force. Una volta che il dado è stato tratto, il potere politico e quello militare hanno dato il meglio di sè, esercitando una guida ferma, coggiosa e sicura, che non si è tirata indietro di fronte alle decisioni più difficili. E proprio tali decisioni si sono rivelate il fattore chiave del successo militare. Lo stesso atteggiamento, tra il semplicistico ed il razzistico, che aveva portato inizialmente ad una grave ed immotivata sottovalutazione del nemico (38), ha lasciato il posto, dopo le prime cocenti perdite, alla consapevolezza di avere a che fare con un osso duro, da affrontare – sul piano militare – con quella stessa determinazione e con quella stessa grinta, che avevano indotto il potere politico a fare la difficile scelta della riconquista *manu militari* delle isole. Determinazione, grinta e *leadership* che sono completamente mancate alla giunta militare di Buenos Ayres, che non ha saputo far seguire alle dichiarazioni reboanti una condotta all'altezza della situazione.

In quarto luogo, se è vero che il conflitto ha costituito il banco di prova di nuovi e sofisticati armamenti, non è men vero che esso ha riconfermato il ruolo insostituibile dell'individuo che li impiega in combattimento. Corollario a ciò è la funzione fondamentale svolta dalla componente terrestre. Come ha giustamente fatto notare il Generale Cappuzzo (39), poiché la guerra era incentrata sul principio di assicurare la sovranità dell'una o dell'altra parte sull'arcipelago, tale sovranità non è stata assicurata materialmente nelle pur brillanti e tecnicamente avanzatissime azioni svoltesi in cielo ed in mare, ma soltanto quando i fanti inglesi hanno posto piede sul terreno impervio delle isole. E la guerra è finita – ed il concetto di sovranità è stato affermato – soltanto quando i fanti britannici hanno sconfitto le truppe di terra nemiche ed hanno conquistato l'intera isola. In questo contesto – le cui peculiarità hanno indotto taluni commentatori a parlare di guerra indiscutibilmente all'antica (40) – ha finito ovviamente con l'affermarsi l'esercito più preparato, più addestrato, più motivato, meglio sostenuto sul piano organizzativo e su quello logistico – così com'era (ed è) nella logica delle cose.

Pur sottolineando il carattere decisivo avuto dalla componente terrestre sugli esiti dello scontro, non possiamo però astenerci dal ricordare – e siamo così giunti al quinto ed ultimo punto – che persino quello che è stato definito *the man of the match* della battaglia, vale a dire il Generale Julian Thompson, dei *Royal Marines*, ha ammesso che, « in definitiva, se avessimo avuto una portaerei come la vecchia « Ark

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(38) « C'eravamo illusi d'aver a che fare con 4 gauchos pieni di fagioli. Dopo tutto, non hanno mai combattuto una guerra in 150 anni. Invece ci sanno fare. Dovremo mostrare più grinta ». (Citato in Mario Cirlello: « Londra blocca le coste argentine e fa vacillare la mediazione Onu », in « La Stampa », 8 maggio 1982. L'articolista riportava le parole di un ufficiale di marina imbarcato su una delle unità componenti la « Task Force »).

(39) Cfr. Gianni Rossi (a cura di): « Parla Cappuzzo. Il soldato è la mia arma », ne « Il Mondo », n. 51, 20 dicembre 1982, pp. 13 - 17.

(40) Cfr. John Shirley: « The Heroes and the Horror », cit..

Giovani abitanti delle Falklands fraternizzano con i Royal Marines.

Royal », con una squadriglia di « Phantom » e di « Buccaneer », non ci sarebbe stato neanche bisogno di sbarcare » (41). In altri termini, se la *Royal Navy* non fosse stata privata delle sue grandi portaerei tradizionali dai tagli operati sulle forze convenzionali a favore di quelle nucleari, forse la guerra delle Falklands non avrebbe neppure avuto luogo, poiché l'Argentina non se la sarebbe sentita di sfidare la potenza navale britannica.

Ci troviamo così di fronte al maggiore problema sollevato dalla guerra: posto che essa ha dimostrato senza ombra di dubbio che il ruolo delle Forze Armate non si esaurisce nella deterrenza, ma può anche consistere nel combattere con la massima efficienza e nel conseguire risultati in tempi brevi, avendo il coraggio di spendere subito poco sangue per evitare di doverne versare in seguito molto di più (42), è chiaro che la concentrazione degli sforzi – effettuata da molte potenze occidentali – sulla componente nucleare (fattore chiave della deterrenza) a scapito di quella convenzionale ha privato queste stesse potenze di quella flessibilità che è indispensabile in campo politico - militare. In tal modo, infatti, esse si sono date la possibilità di combattere una guerra nucleare, ma si sono private della possibilità di sostenere conflitti di carattere meno elevato, non disponendo più delle forze convenzionali atte a combatterli e non possedendo, nel contempo, un arsenale nucleare tale da rendere la loro minaccia atomica veramente credibile. Senza contare che, in determinati tipi di controversie, il ricorso all'arma atomica per la loro soluzione risulta addirittura inimmaginabile.

Tutti i commentatori sono stati concordi nell'osservare che, se il governo argentino avesse atteso ancora meno di un anno prima di procedere all'occupazione dell'arcipelago conteso, la Gran Bretagna non sarebbe stata più in grado di inviare nell'Atlantico del Sud neppure quella relativamente modesta *Task Force* che in aprile ha inviato. Il che ci porta direttamente al massimo insegnamento deducibile dal conflitto: è senz'altro un grave errore procedere ad una scelta unilaterale tra armamento nucleare e convenzionale; l'uno non esclude (non può e non deve escludere) l'altro. Una potenza che intenda essere in grado di far udire la propria voce nell'agone internazionale deve essere provvista di armi e mezzi tali da consentirle di operare a *tutti* i livelli di conflittualità. Guai a privilegiarne alcuni, posti in genere vicino ai vertici dello spettro, perché in tal modo essa si esporrebbe ad attacchi portatile a livelli di conflittualità inferiori, ma non per questo meno pericolosi. E' un ammaestramento che le potenze occidentali dovrebbero avere tratto da tante amare esperienze fatte dal 1945 in poi e che – stranamente – ancora oggi paiono restie a comprendere appieno. Non c'è che augurarsi che questa della guerra delle Falklands sia l'occasione buona.

Piero Visani

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(41) « Thompson: perché preferivo la notte », cit..
(42) Cfr. « La lezione delle Falklands », in « Politica Militare », anno IV, n. 13, luglio - agosto 1982, p. 3.

LA GUERRA DELLE
FALKLANDS

Piero Visani, laureato in Lettere moderne, è redattore capo della rivista « Politica Militare ». Studioso di problemi strategici e di storia militare, è autore di numerosi scritti in materia, tra cui il volume « Esercito, come? », La Gaia Scienza, Milano, 1981

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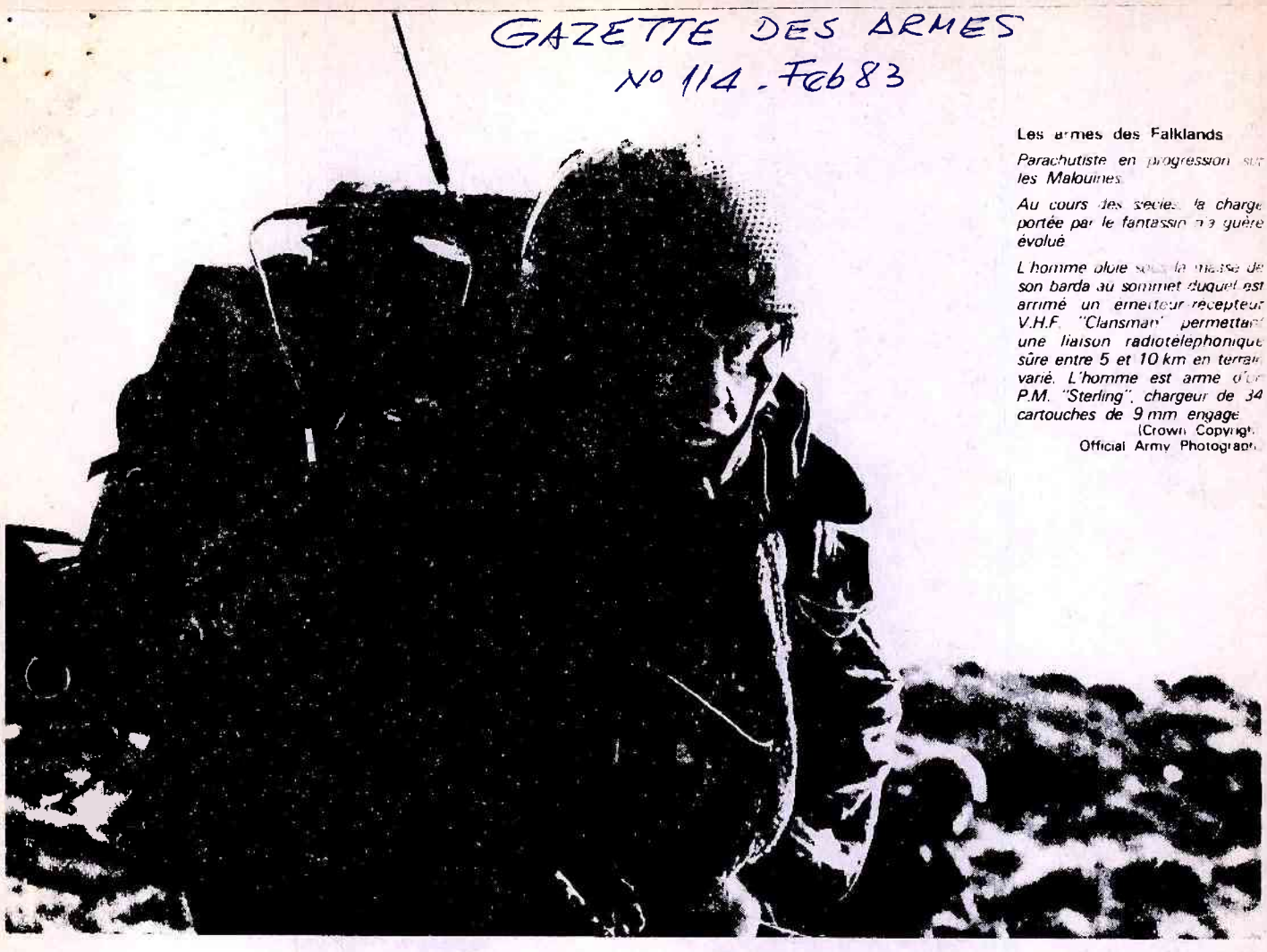


Les armes des Falklands

Parachutiste en progression sur les Malouines.

Au cours des siècles, la charge portée par le fantassin a guère évolué.

L'homme ploie sous la masse de son barda au sommet duquel est arrimé un émetteur-récepteur V.H.F. "Clansman" permettant une liaison radiotéléphonique sûre entre 5 et 10 km en terrain varié. L'homme est armé d'un P.M. "Sterling", chargeur de 34 cartouches de 9 mm engagé.

(Crown Copyright. Official Army Photograph)

FALKLANDS
LES JOURS LES PLUS LONGS

par Pierre Lorain

La guerre des Malouines est une trop récente affaire pour que les deux belligérants aient eu le temps de publier leur "Livre blanc" traitant du développement de la crise, évaluant tactiques et armements et retraçant l'action des unités engagées. Les rapports sont actuellement dépouillés dans les ministères argentins et britanniques et il est probable que la plupart des leçons qui seront tirées resteront secrètes. Nous avons été surpris du faible nombre d'images de cette guerre qui apparurent sur les écrans de télévision ou dans les périodiques.

Un éditeur britannique bien connu (éditions "Osprey") vient de combler quelque peu ce vide en publiant, sous le nom de "Battle for the Falklands", trois excellentes études réalisées par des spécialistes de l'armement avec l'aide du ministre de la Défense du Royaume-Uni. Les auteurs ont pu s'entretenir avec les combattants et avoir accès à certains documents et photographies inédites prises sur le terrain au cours même des combats.

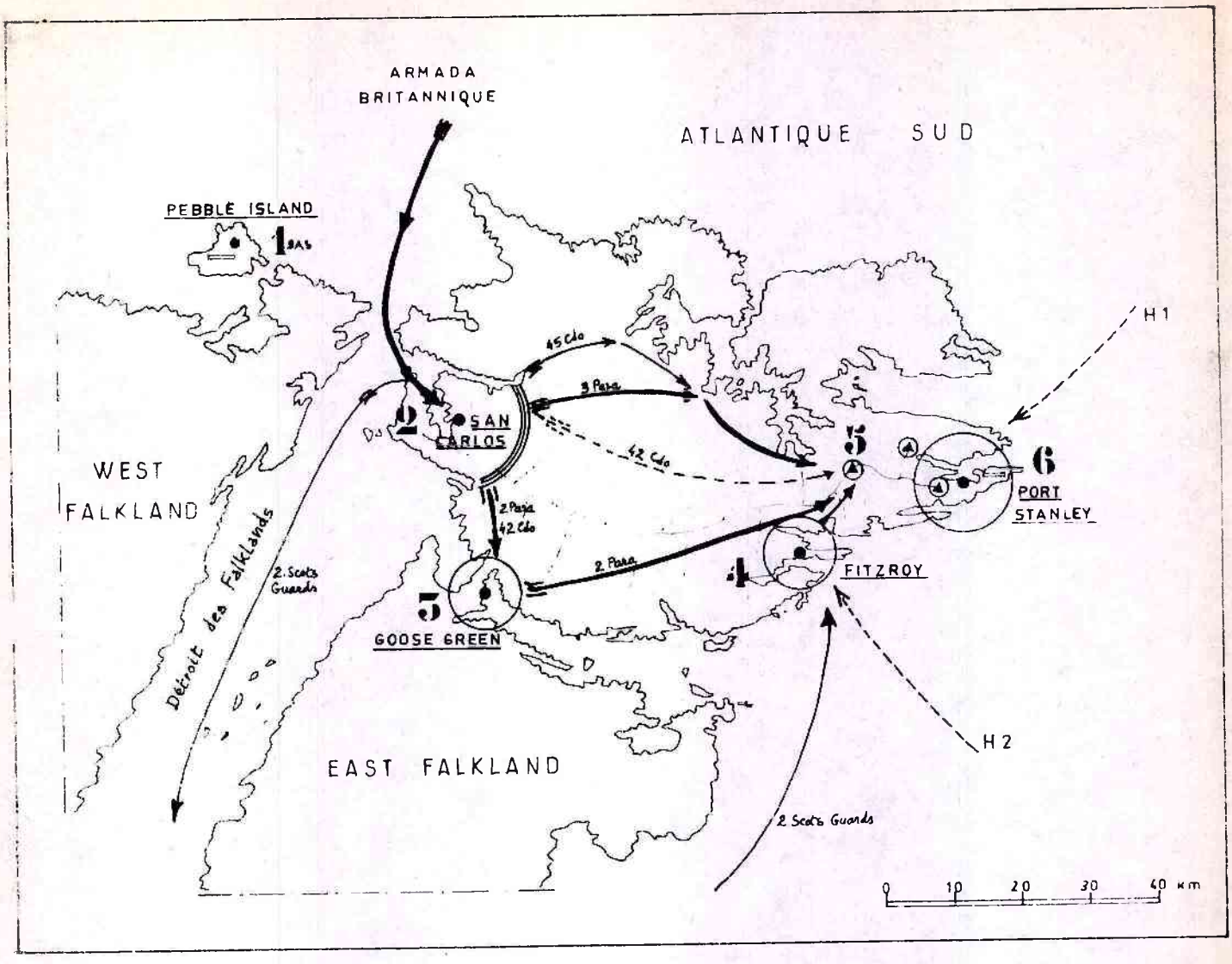
C'est une brève synthèse de cette source que nous présentons aujourd'hui aux lecteurs de la *Gazette des Armes* en restant à l'échelon de la compagnie et en nous bornant aux seules armes individuelles utilisées par les unités débarquées.

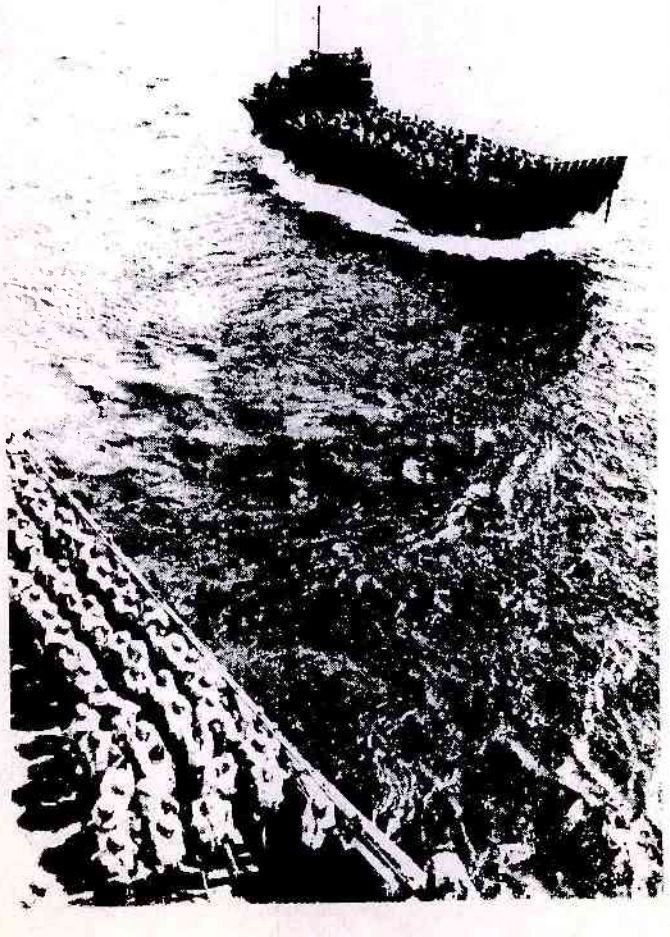
Quarante ans après Dieppe

La reconquête des îles Falklands et de la Géorgie du Sud par les troupes du Royaume-Uni constitue la plus grande expédition amphibie menée depuis l'affaire de Suez en 1956. Cette opération, baptisée "Corporate", c'est trois fois en volume le raid anglo-canadien contre Dieppe en 1942. Mais, autant Dieppe fut une action de vive force quasi suicidaire contre laquelle s'acharna la malchance, autant la reconquête des Malouines fut favorisée par le sort et conduite en souplesse avec le souci majeur de ménager les vies en jouant sur le temps de l'espace.

En dépit des très forts effectifs engagés de part et d'autre dans l'Antarctique – au total plus de 20 000 hommes soutenus par une large proportion de leurs flottes nationales –, les pertes en vies humaines en quatre semaines furent inférieures aux pertes subies à Dieppe après dix heures de combats. Mais ce qui est intéressant, c'est qu'à Dieppe les pertes des assaillants avaient été de 6 contre 1 en faveur des défenseurs allemands, alors qu'aux Malouines la proportion se trouve totalement inversée avec 1 contre 2 en faveur des attaquants britanniques.

On pourrait étudier les raisons de cette inversion, elles sont nombreuses et sortiraient du cadre de cet exposé. Citons simplement : l'avantage du terrain semi-désertique, un solide appui-feu joint à une excellente technique d'assaut faisant appel à l'infiltration et à la surprise et menée par des troupes hautement spécialisées et très manœu-





Légende de la carte :

On les attendait à l'est (H1 ou H2), ils arrivèrent par l'ouest (2) après avoir détruit le radar de surveillance nord des îles (1) sous couvert d'un raid de sabotage des avions d'assaut argentins basés sur Pebble Island. Dans le même temps, un bombardement naval sur Fitzroy (4) donnait aux Argentins l'impression que leur adversaire jouait H2.

La manœuvre fut menée exclusivement sur l'East Falkland. Le terrain est divisé par une crête rocheuse de San Carlos à Port Stanley sur laquelle les Argentins ont établi leurs postes d'observation.

Queue de trajectoire : le mont Kent (5) dominant la capitale Port Stanley (6), but de la mission.

A. Attaque du flanc nord (2-5) : par le 45e Royal Marine Commando et le 3e régiment de parachutistes. Manœuvre à pied par suite de la destruction des hélicoptères de transport. Seul le 42e Royal Marine Commando est héliporté en précurseur sur (5).

B. Attaque du flanc sud (2-3-5) : dans le même temps, le 2e parachutistes et une compagnie du 42e Royal Marine Commando se saisissent de Goose Green (3) où les Argentins ont héliporté leurs réserves. Le 2e parachutistes continue sur le mont Kent (5). Le 2e Scots Guards et les Gardes galloises arrivent par mer à Fitzroy (4) après avoir contourné les îles par le sud et font mouvement sur (5).

C. Regroupement des forces en vue de la descente sur Port Stanley.

D. Reddition des forces argentines.

La manœuvre des Malouines restera un exemple d'intervention rapide à grande distance parfaitement organisée et brillamment menée, avec de très faibles pertes en vies humaines, contre un adversaire courageux, bien retranché, supérieur en nombre et en matériel.

Vue prise d'hélicoptère sur les navires de débarquement britanniques dans les eaux de San-Carlos. Les hommes revêtus de leurs gilets de sauvetage attendent, l'arme au pied, l'abattement de la rampe.
(Crown Copyright. Official Army Photograph)

vrières. Enfin, la vulnérabilité du retranchement linéaire face à la manœuvre agressive.

En gros, la leçon de la guerre des Malouines sur le plan tactique de l'infanterie, c'est l'échec de l'immobilisme face à la manœuvre, à la condition que les assaillants disposent

de la maîtrise du ciel. Ces conditions ne font que reproduire celles du "Blitzkrieg" allemand et des raids de commandos de la Seconde Guerre mondiale puisque l'arme nucléaire resta au râtelier. Une réserve cependant : en raison de l'extrême éloignement de leur base de départ, les Britanniques durent improviser une sorte de "mission impossible", opération de prestige dans laquelle le facteur chance joua un grand rôle. "Corporate" fut en quelque sorte un gigantesque coup de poker dans un jeu difficile dont les meilleurs atouts étaient, lors de la première donne, entre les mains des Argentins.

La séquence des opérations

On peut en faire le résumé dans le tableau ci-après :

1. L'invasion argentine (2 jours) :
A. 2 avril 1982. Attaque de vive force et prise de la capitale Port Stanley défendue par 67 Royal Marines. Rapport des forces : 15 contre 1 en faveur des Argentins.
B. 3 avril. Attaque et prise de l'île de la Géorgie du Sud défendue par 22 Royal Marines.

2. L'attente (3 semaines : 3-21 avril).
Du côté britannique :
Préparation du corps expéditionnaire (10 000 hommes environ).
2. Elaboration du plan d'attaque "Opération Corporate".
B. Du côté argentin :
1. Acheminement des renforts (10 000 hommes environ) et travaux de retranchements.
2. Hypothèses retenues sur l'action ennemie : attaque surprise de nuit sur Port Stanley ;
H 1 : directe par le nord.
H 2 : par le sud, tête de pont rapprochée à Fitzroy.

3. La riposte britannique (7 semaines : 2 avril-14 juin).
A. *Intervention, des éléments avancés* (4 semaines : 21 avril-24 mai).
1. Reconnaissance et préparation du terrain par les unités spéciales (SAS/SBS), 26 raids dont 5 contacts avec l'ennemi ; avec, dans la foulée, la reconquête de la Géorgie du Sud le 25 avril par un raid de 60 commandos (SAS/SBS/RM).
2. Blocus naval des îles et mise en place de la flotte d'intervention.
3. Harcèlements aériens et navals contre les positions argentines.
Tentative de sortie de la flotte argentine dissuadée par le torpillage en haute mer, sur ordre spécial de Londres, du croiseur "General Belgrano" par le sous-marin nucléaire H.M.S. "Conqueror".
B. *Débarquement en force* (1 semaine : 21-26 mars).
Etablissement d'une tête de pont lointaine (San Carlos) non envisagée dans le plan argentin.
Actions efficaces de freinage par l'aviation d'assaut argentine.

C. *Manœuvre du gros des forces* (2 semaines : 28 mai-14 juin).
Manœuvre classique en pince par flanc nord et sud, sous couvert de l'appui naval et aérien (1 obus toutes les 2 secondes pour maintenir les Argentins dans leurs tranchées).
1. Flanc sud : saisie de l'objectif secondaire (Darwin, Goose Green), en mesure de faire mouvement vers le nord.
2. Flanc nord : saisie des points hauts dominant l'objectif principal (Port Stanley), en mesure de lancer l'assaut.
3. Mission de réduction des points d'appuis isolés par les Gurkhas.

D. *Assaut final* (2 nuits : 11 au 12 et 13 au 14 juin).
Reddition de l'ensemble des troupes argentines le 14 juin à 20 h 59, heure locale.

La manœuvre et le feu

Il convient d'ajouter à ce calendrier quelques commentaires traitant plus spécialement du feu de l'infanterie.

La première action fut engagée le 3 avril lors de l'approche de l'île de la Géorgie du Sud par les forces argentines

La longue marche à travers un terrain difficile et inhospitalier.

Les hommes sont armés du F.S.A. "FAL". Remarquer le second soldat au premier plan qui porte, en plus de son fusil en bandoulière et de son équipement, une mitrailleuse ; celui qui le précède porte le trépied.
(Crown Copyright. Official Army Photograph)

embarquées à bord d'une frégate et d'un navire de transport et soutenues par des hélicoptères. La garnison, composée de 22 hommes des Royal Marines, commandés par le lieutenant Keith Mills, laissa approcher la frégate et le cargo et ouvrit le feu à courte portée avec un LRAC léger "Law" de 66 mm et un canon sans recul "Carl Gustav" de 84 mm appuyés par le feu d'une mitrailleuse de 7,62. La frégate, touchée par deux projectiles de 84 mm et deux de 66 mm, le pont et la passerelle balayés par des salves de mitrailleuse, fut sérieusement endommagée et dut se retirer avec le cargo également touché. De plus, un hélicoptère Puma fut abattu et une Alouette forcée d'atterrir. Les Britanniques n'eurent qu'un seul blessé.

Lors de l'attaque contre Port Stanley, la disproportion des forces était telle que le major Norman dut disperser ses 67 hommes sur 5 positions clés. Néanmoins, 1 engin de débarquement pour les chars et le personnel fut coulé par 2 projectiles antichars de 66 et de 84 mm.

Les nombreuses infiltrations des unités spéciales britanniques par air et par mer furent particulièrement efficaces et conduites dans le style légendaire des commandos de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale : on peut citer à titre d'exemple les actions de reconnaissance préliminaires à la reconquête par les Royal Marines de l'île de la Géorgie du Sud avec le parachutage en mer, avant le 20 avril, de 12 nageurs de combat du SBS à partir d'un Hercules "C-130" : ces hommes, revêtus de leurs scaphandres individuels, plongèrent pour s'introduire à bord du sous-marin – "Onyx" – qui les attendait en immersion pour les conduire sur le point de débarquement qui leur était assigné. Le lendemain, ce sont 15 hommes du 22e SAS et du 2e SBS qui furent infiltrés sur l'île par hélicoptère.

Particulièrement importante fut la mission de sabotage menée le 14 mai contre la petite Pebble Island à la pointe nord des Falklands par 8 SAS débarqués dans la nuit du 11 et chargés d'établir un poste d'observation sur la cote 277 et de baliser un terrain pour le débarquement de 45 hommes et d'un officier contrôleur de tir de la marine. Les 53 hommes se scindèrent en deux groupes : une équipe de couverture chargée de fixer la garnison argentine de l'îlot par le feu des armes automatiques légères ap-

Livraison de matériel par hélicoptère moyen porteur. A l'arrière-plan, une "Gazelle". (Crown Copyright. Official Army Photograph.)

puyées par un bombardement naval tandis que l'équipe de saboteurs détruisait les 12 avions argentins basés sur l'île, le dépôt de munitions et la station de radar mobile. Les pertes du côté britannique ne furent que de deux blessés légers.

Si la destruction des avions d'assaut représentait une très lourde perte pour les Argentins, elle masquait en fait l'objectif principal de cette action qui était la préparation de la future tête de pont britannique avec la *destruction du radar d'approche nord* qui aurait signalé longtemps à l'avance le point d'application principal des forces de débarquement. L'arme individuelle portée par les SAS durant ces actions était le fusil d'assaut américain "M-16" du calibre 5,56 mm. Mais ce furent les charges explosives de plastic qui menèrent à bien la mission.

Durant l'établissement de la tête de pont à San Carlos, les troupes du Royaume-Uni durent se défendre essentiellement contre l'attaque aérienne argentine remarquablement courageuse et terriblement précise et efficace, qui réussit à toucher plus ou moins sérieusement près de *50 % des navires de guerre* engagés. Les armes automatiques légères : mitrailleuses de 12,7 et de 7,62 mm, FM Bren et même F.S.A. eurent souvent raison des hélicoptères, mais les engins sol-air portables, essentiellement des "Blowpipe" permirent d'abattre huit appareils argentins tandis que le "Rapier", arme collective lourde, s'en adjugeait treize.

C'est durant cette phase d'établissement de tête de pont que les hommes du Royaume-Uni subirent leurs plus lourdes pertes en hommes et en matériel. Pour ne parler que des troupes à terre, il y eut trois sérieux revers. La perte par accident le 18 mai, probablement par collision avec un albatros, d'un hélicoptère "Sea-King" transportant 19 membres du 22e SAS. La perte par action aérienne ennemie le 25 mai du navire porte-conteneurs "Atlantic Conveyor" transportant notamment 3 hélicoptères "Chinook" et 8 "Wessex" : la quasi-totalité des navettes chargées d'héliporter les troupes depuis leur tête de pont jusqu'aux hauteurs dominant l'objectif principal de Port Stanley. Cette perte irréparable obligea le brigadier Thompson à changer ses plans et à faire exécuter la manœuvre du flanc nord à pied, avec un chargement individuel qui pouvait atteindre et même dépasser 45 kg, à travers un terrain extrêmement difficile et sous des conditions climatiques très rudes.

Enfin, sur le flanc sud, les hommes de la Garde galloise subirent de lourdes pertes (63 morts et 83 blessés) lors de l'attaque aérienne du 8 juin contre Fitzroy, au cours de laquelle deux navires logistiques de 5 600 tonneaux furent atteints de plein fouet par des bombes. La télévision a montré les images des hélicoptères volant jusque dans la fumée des incendies pour tenter de sauver les hommes restés à bord alors que les munitions explosaient.

Nous citerons pour terminer cette revue des faits les plus significatifs l'extraordinaire et apparemment anachronique assaut à la baïonnette mené, lors de la phase finale des opérations, par la Garde écossaise, non seulement pour la gloire et la tradition mais aussi pour forcer la décision. Les Ecossais renouvelaient, quarante ans plus tard, l'enlèvement à la baïonnette des batteries côtières allemandes de Varengeville par leurs ancêtres du N° 4 Commando sous les ordres de lord Lovat. Il ne s'agissait pas cette fois de positions d'artillerie, mais de retranchements argentins courageusement défendus par des troupes de Marine et solidement établis sur le mont Tumbledown, dominant Port Stanley.

Lorsque les hommes de la Garde écossaise atteignirent leur objectif le matin du 14 juin, ils avaient perdu 9 tués et 41 blessés ; les Argentins laissaient 100 morts et blessés et 27 prisonniers. Abandonnant leurs positions des crêtes sous le choc de l'artillerie d'accompagnement, des assauts de l'infanterie, du bombardement naval et aérien, les Argentins se replièrent en masse vers la ville de Port Stanley sous le feu des 105. Afin d'éviter un massacre inutile et des pertes dans la population civile, les Britanniques donnèrent l'ordre de cesser le feu, et engagèrent des pourparlers avec le général Menendez. La reddition de toutes les troupes argentines devint effective le même jour, le 14 juin 1982 à 20 h 59. Les hostilités prenaient fin.

Les armes des Falklands

Les armes individuelles, la plupart d'origine belge ou britannique, sont bien connues et ont été ou seront traitées en détail dans la *Gazette des Armes*. Elles étaient pratiquement les mêmes du côté britannique et du côté argentin, parfois plus modernes chez les Argentins qui n'avaient eu que l'embarras du choix pour faire l'acquisition ces dernières années de l'armement occidental le plus sophistiqué. Tous les calibres étaient du standard OTAN : 7,62 N et 5,56 mm pour les armes d'épaule, 9 mm parabellum pour les P.M. et P.A. Les armes individuelles ont perdu de leur importance de nos jours, au profit des armes collectives à grande puissance de feu ; nous passerons rapidement en revue la panoplie utilisée au cours des combats en indiquant les principales caractéristiques techniques de l'arsenal britannique.

Le F.S.A., dénommé "L1A1" ou plus familièrement "FAL Rifle", est la version anglaise du fusil belge "F.N. F.A.L." c'est une arme à emprunt de gaz, à tir coup par coup tirant la cartouche réglementaire OTAN de 7,62 mm. Magasin de 20 cartouches, longueur totale de l'arme 113 cm, canon de 53 cm. Masse de l'arme approvisionnée : 4,7 kg.

La mitrailleuse légère "L7A1", communément appelée "GPMG" (general purpose machine gun, mitrailleuse à tout faire), est également la version anglaise de la mitrailleuse belge "F.N. M.A.G.". Elle tire la cartouche du fusil. C'est une arme à emprunt de gaz tirant des cartouches métalliques. La masse de l'arme est de 11 kg, sa longueur de 126 cm et sa cadence de tir de 700 à 900 coups minute. Sa dotation est en principe de 3 par section, soit entre 50 et 60 par régiment, mais les parachutistes aux Falklands en disposaient de *6 par section* ! L'arme utilisée en telle quantité donne une grande puissance de feu à la sec-

tion d'infanterie ; elle est souvent portée et tirée à bras francs par un seul homme comme un F.M. Mais son poids la rend impopulaire dans la troupe qui la préfère montée sur trépied et utilisée comme arme collective d'appui-feu.

Le F.M. : en principe, il n'y en a plus dans l'armée britannique d'aujourd'hui mais nostalgie et tradition aidant, on ne pouvait oublier l'excellent et très populaire F.M. Bren de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale (voir *Gazette des Armes* nos 99 et 101 de novembre 1981 et janvier 1982) qui fut transformé dans les années 1950 pour le tir de la cartouche OTAN. L'arme rebaptisée "L4A2" ressemble au Bren comme son frère mais elle utilise, à la place du chargeur incurvé si représentatif un chargeur droit de 30 cartouches qui suffit à en modifier la silhouette. Les Bren modifiés sont réservés pour les troupes d'intervention rapide dans les climats tropicaux mais certaines unités en furent dotées aux Malouines, notamment les commandos des Royal Marines.

Le fusil de tireur d'élite. Sous sa dénomination "L42A1", il n'est autre que le bon vieux Lee-Enfield n° 4 MK I de la Seconde Guerre mondiale (voir *Gazette des Armes* n° 14 de mars 1974), recanonné pour tirer la cartouche OTAN. Ces fusils sont équipés d'une lunette "L1A1" et un canon lourd de haute précision ; le fût et le garde-main ont été recoupés au niveau de la grenadière. Le magasin Lee Enfield reçoit toujours 10 cartouches (le contenu de 2 lames chargeurs) mais sa forme a été légèrement modifiée pour tenir compte de l'utilisation de cartouches à gorge en remplacement des cartouches à bourrelet de .303. Ce fusil fut utilisé aux Falklands par les tireurs d'élite du régiment parachutiste.

Citons, à propos des lunettes de tir, la lunette "IWS" à intensification de lumière latente largement utilisée lors des opérations de nuit, notamment sur la mitrailleuse et le FAL.

Les armes de 9 mm : les pistolets mitrailleurs ont beaucoup perdu de la faveur qu'ils avaient acquise au cours de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Les Britanniques les mettent en dotation plus particulièrement pour l'armement des officiers supérieurs et pour certaines opérations spéciales dans une version à silencieux. L'arme réglementaire est le "L2A3" ou "Sterling". Elle tire la cartouche de 9 mm parabellum en chargeurs de 34 cartouches ; c'est une arme légère classique à culasse non calée, sa masse est de 2,7 kg vide et de 3,6 kg approvisionnée ; une crosse repliable permet de réduire sa longueur à 50 cm et de l'utiliser comme un pistolet. La cadence théorique du tir est de 50 coups minute. La version silencieuse a une longueur de 86 cm (crosse dépliée) ou de 66 cm (crosse repliée), avec un canon de 19,8 cm.

L'arme de poing encore portée par tradition et pour l'armement des unités de la Military Police est le P.A. belge F.N. G.P.-35 (voir *Gazette des Armes* n° 53 d'octobre 1977). Quelques officiers argentins portaient également le P.A. réglementaire U.S. Colt .45 modèle 1911-A1 *(Gazette des Armes* n° 59 d'avril 1978).

Les armes en calibre 5,5 mm : il n'existe pas encore de fusil d'assaut national en dotation dans l'armée du Royaume-Uni. Lorsque besoin est, on fait appel au "M-16" américain qui est l'arme en dotation du SAS. Le "M-16" (voir *Gazette des Armes* nos 79 et 83 de février et juin 1980) est le fusil réglementaire de l'armée des Etats-Unis ; c'est une arme légère à emprunt de gaz et à tir sélectif qui tire la cartouche réglementaire OTAN de 5,56 mm. Elle utilise des magasins de 20 ou 30 cartouches. Sa masse est de 3,5 kg approvisionnée à 20 cartouches. Sa cadence pratique maximale de tir est de 45 à 65 coups minute en tir semi-automatique et de 150 à 200 coups minute en tir par rafales. La longueur totale de l'arme est de 99 cm avec un canon de 50,8 cm.

Avant de passer aux armes à grande puissance de feu, il faut mentionner la réapparition aux Malouines de la mitrailleuse Browning U.S. de 12,7 bien connue chez nous depuis la dernière guerre, mais dont la conception remonte à 1917 ! Un lot de ces mitrailleuses du type "M2" avait été acheté par les Britanniques au début des années 1950

Sitôt débarqués, les hommes creusent leur trou individuel pour se protéger contre les attaques aériennes en terrain découvert. A l'arrière-plan, un hélicoptère débarque du matériel. (Crown Copyright. Official Army Photograph.)

en vue de les monter sur les véhicules de 1 et 3 tonnes en protection terrestre et aérienne. Ce projet ne se réalisa pas et les armes restèrent stockées durant trente ans. La guerre des Malouines et l'urgent besoin en armes anti aériennes fit ressortir les 12,7 de leur gangue de graisse ; en dotation pour une section des compagnies de commandement, elles apportèrent une aide précieuse aux canons automatiques dans leur action contre les positions argentines et en défense aérienne rapprochée.

Le mortier de 81 mm : transportable à dos d'homme, le mortier britannique léger à tube court "Rarde" apporte un appui-feu puissant, précis et souple aux unités d'infanterie progressant à pied, sans nuire à leur mobilité. Il remplace l'ancien mortier de 3 pouces. Sa vitesse de tir atteint 15 coups minute, sa masse totale est de 36 kg décomposable en trois fardeaux. La portée varie selon les charges : de 0 à 4 500 mètres avec les charges 1 à 6 et de 4 500 à 5 660 mètres avec l'emploi des charges 7 et 8. Les projectiles, explosifs, incendiaires au phosphore, fumigènes ou éclairants pèsent en moyenne 4,4 kg. L'équipe est de 3 servants. Le mortier de 81 rendit de très grands services lors de la phase de manœuvre à pied des unités britaniques, mais il n'était pas suffisant à lui seul pour assurer un appui-feu convenable et dut être appuyé par le tir de l'artillerie terrestre classique (105 mm), par l'artillerie navale et le bombardement aérien.

Les engins antichars : on en trouve essentiellement 3 qui entrèrent avec succès en action aux Falklands, servis par les troupes du Royaume-Uni :

Le "Law" de 66 mm (Light Anti-Tank Weapon), arme antichars légère à courte portée (100/200 m).

Le "Carl Gustav" de 84 mm, canon sans recul d'origine suédoise construit sous licence. Arme réglementaire britannique pouvant être servie par un seul homme. Sa portée d'utilisation pratique contre les chars est de 400 mètres. Elle tire une roquette à ailerons stabilisateurs déployables et tête à charge creuse. La charge propulsive a une durée de combustion de 1,5 seconde.

Enfin, le **"Milan"** (d'origine franco-allemande), l'arme antichars du fantassin la plus puissante. Le dispositif lanceur est à guidage semi-automatique par système infrarouge et télécommande par fils, le tireur n'ayant qu'à maintenir son réticule au centre de la cible. L'arme a une portée utile de 25 à 2 000 mètres (avec une durée de vol de 12,5 secondes à cette distance); elle tire un missile filoguidé à combustible solide (propergols avec accélérateur et propulseur de croisière); la tête à charge creuse pénètre 352 mm de blindage à 65°. Le Milan est capable de détruire les chars les plus lourds à toutes distances. L'engin lanceur est normalement tiré en poste sur un trépied, mais il peut à la rigueur être épaulé et tiré à bras francs à partir d'une tranchée; un système de visée périscopique permet au tireur-pointeur de rester abrité. La masse de l'arme approvisionnée est de 26 ou 23 kg selon qu'elle est fixée ou non à son trépied; la masse du missile en conteneur entre pour la part de 11 kg.

Le Milan fut utilisé à la façon d'une pièce d'artillerie à tir tendu par les parachutistes, les Gardes galloises et le 7e Gurkha Rifles avec des effets dévastateurs contre les positions fortifiées argentines, tandis que le Law et le Carl Gustav endommagèrent gravement une frégate et un navire de transport de troupes et coulèrent un engin de débarquement pour les chars et le personnel.

La reddition des troupes argentines à Port Stanley.

Tous les fusils sont des "FAL" belges, identiques aux fusils britanniques; certains ont une crosse métallique pliante. Les magasins ont été au préalable séparés des armes et sont jetés à côté.

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Les engins sol-air : ils furent représentés par 3 types d'engins; deux de faible puissance tirés à l'épaule par un seul homme : le "Blowpipe" (sarbacane) anglais et le "Stinger" U.S. réservé au SAS et un système lourd transportable à bord de 2 Land-Rovers, le "Rapier" d'origine britannique.

Le **"Blowpipe"** (fabrication Short Bros.) est destiné à la défense aérienne rapprochée, il tire une roquette à combustible solide et ogive explosive. Sa faible portée limite son utilité à l'engagement d'avions volant bas et arrivant de préférence face au tireur. Mais un seul missile de Blowpipe à téléguidage optique suffit pour abattre l'appareil attaquant. L'arme pèse 21 kg, elle est longue de 1,40 mètre et possède un système I.F.F. (identification ami-ennemi) automatique.

On peut lui attribuer 8 victoires certaines du côté britannique. Les Argentins l'utilisèrent également, abattant sans doute 2 Gazelles.

Le **"Stinger"** est l'équivalent américain du Blowpipe. Bien qu'il ait été déployé sur les plages, on ne signale pas de victoire aérienne à son actif.

Le **"Rapier"** n'étant pas utilisé par l'infanterie dépasse un peu le cadre de cette analyse. Citons-le cependant par curiosité. Construit par "British Aerospace", c'est un système d'arme mobile et aérotransportable utilisé dans les régiments d'artillerie et de l'ALAT ainsi que dans la R.A.F. Il est destiné à engager les avions volant à Mach 2 jusqu'au plafond de 5 000 mètres. Le dispositif lanceur à tourelle à 4 missiles sol-air comprend un radar d'acquisition associé à un système d'identification IFF (ami/ennemi). Les missiles ont une longueur de 2,23 m et une masse de 65 kg. Deux Land-Rovers dont une remorque sont nécessaires pour transporter l'arme et ses munitions.

Les missiles du Rapier abattirent 13 appareils argentins. La leçon que l'on peut tirer dès à présent est que les forces de reconquête britanniques manquèrent de moyens de tir antiaérien et notamment de batteries d'artillerie classiques : 40 Bofors et canons automatiques multitubes de 20 et de 30 mm dont la boule de feu est remarquablement dissuasive et efficace contre les avions attaquant au ras du sol.

En guise de conclusion

Cette revue au pas de course de la guerre des Malouines ne peut avoir la prétention de permettre de tirer des conclusions même partielles; d'autant plus que, le conflit s'étant engagé entre deux grandes puissances faisant partie du même bloc et possédant les mêmes armes, il n'y a pas eu de compétition entre deux conceptions du combat servies par des armes différentes. D'autre part, du fait du théâtre d'opérations, les blindés n'ont joué pratiquement aucun rôle déterminant et la menace nucléaire n'a jamais été brandie. Les informations actuellement disponibles permettent néanmoins de mettre en lumière quelques sujets de réflexion pour des conflits futurs, ainsi :

– Du point de vue de la mobilité, l'appoint essentiel de "lignes" d'hélicoptères utilisés en navettes pour les déplacements rapides au ras du sol, remplaçant VTT et fardiers.

– Du point de vue de l'appui-feu, la constante montée en puissance du feu de l'artillerie avec le retour de l'artillerie d'accompagnement avançant dans la foulée, sous la forme des engins antichars portatifs tirés à bras francs et l'usage intensif du mortier de 81. Par contre, l'insuffisance du feu anti-aérien face à l'efficacité de l'aviation d'assaut.

– L'augmentation de la précision du tir à tous les niveaux; la remise à l'honneur du tir de précision au fusil avec l'abandon du pistolet mitrailleur au profit du fusil d'assaut.

– L'affaiblissement du mythe du blindage avec pour corollaire la révélation de l'efficacité des missiles.

– L'augmentation du volume de la logistique par rapport au volume des unités sur le terrain; la diminution du coût en vies humaines étant proportionnelle à l'augmentation du volume du coût et du matériel engagé.

– Enfin, l'importance essentielle du renseignement collecté longtemps à l'avance par des unités spéciales, héritières directes du S.O.E. de la dernière guerre mondiale, et transmis instantanément et sûrement par l'électronique.

Mais il reste au-dessus de tout cela une constante fondamentale : la valeur morale du soldat, la discipline et la cohésion d'hommes responsables conscients d'agir pour une juste cause sur un terrain soigneusement préparé et confortés par l'assurance que le maximum a été mis en œuvre pour les soutenir et les aider. ■

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Remerciements à M. l'Attaché militaire de l'ambassade de Grande Bretagne, pour son aide et pour les photographies inédites du ministère de la Défense britannique.

FALKLAND ISLANDS

A Melancholy Anniversary

One year after the invasion, the kelpers mourn a life gone forever

The town meeting began exactly at 8 p.m. in the dimly lighted white clapboard auditorium overlooking Port Stanley's harbor. In the chair was Councilor Terry Peck, 45, an earnest, stocky plumber and former police chief who dutifully jotted notes on the proceedings. But the residents of the tiny capital (pop. 1,050) of the Falkland Islands were not getting together simply to discuss the local issues that bedevil most small communities. One man asked when the town gym, which is now occupied by British soldiers, would be open to the public again. Another grumbled about the military trucks that have been tearing up streets. As if to underscore the new realities of life in the Falklands, a British Phantom jet fighter screamed overhead.

After Argentina's invasion of the windswept South Atlantic archipelago one year ago, the Falklanders talked excitedly about the 98-ship British armada that was being sent 8,000 miles to recapture the islands. And when, 74 days after the attack, the British won the surrender of the 10,000-man Argentine garrison, they greeted their saviors with cheers and tears. But now, with 4,300 British servicemen stationed on the islands, the 1,800 Falklanders have become painfully aware that life will never again be as it was before the early morning of April 2, when 150 Argentines suddenly landed on a beach near Port Stanley. That is a sad realization for the "kelpers," as the natives proudly call themselves, after the seaweed that grows abundantly in their waters. Says Steve Whitely, 33, a veterinarian who emigrated from Scotland seven years ago: "Before the war, it was so quiet. You knew everybody. A lot of people never thought of the 'after.' "

The signs of change are everywhere. Before the war, the townspeople eagerly awaited the arrival of the supply boat that came from Britain every three months. Last week the harbor was filled with at least 17 warships and merchant vessels, and the locals have grown so blasé that only word of a Royal Navy submarine stirs much interest. The busiest part of town is the jetty, where supplies are taken off the ships and soldiers come and go all day. Trucks hauling machinery and building supplies snort up the hills toward Stanley Airport, which is crowded with Phantom and Harrier jets and ringed by gleaming Rapier antiaircraft missiles.

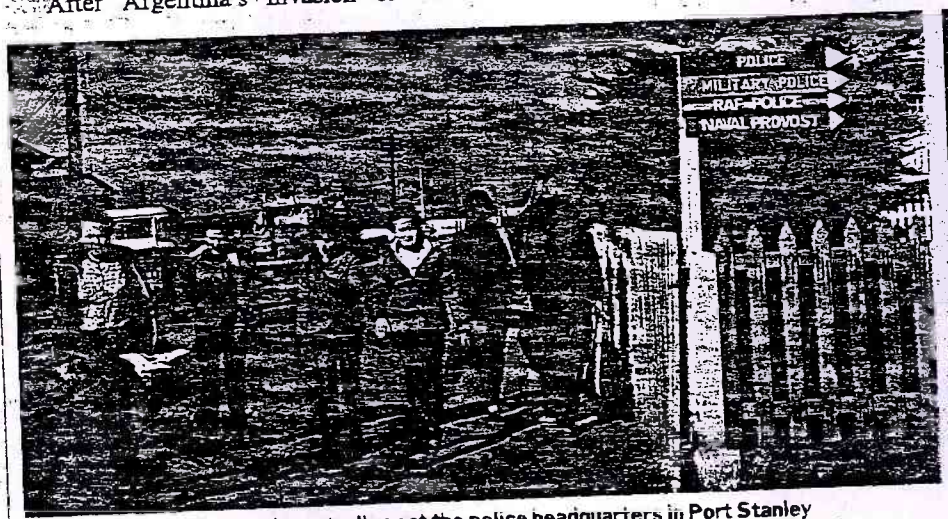
To the soldiers, the kelpers have become known as "bennies," after a British TV character who is a decent, hard-working but thickheaded farmer. When military commanders reportedly banned the sobriquet, the troops quickly devised a new one: "stills," short for "still bennies." The natives, in turn, refer to the soldiers as "squaddies," an archaic British dig at military men of low rank.

Most of the 4,300 soldiers live in public buildings and on troopships, while the remainder stay in private homes. The arrangement seems to suit the servicemen as well as residents, who receive $2 a night for each boarder's bed and breakfast. "For the sailors, it's like going back home to find Mother cooking a meal," says Major General David Thorne, commander of the British forces on the island. But there are tensions. In February, Vivienne Perkins, 40, declared her pub, The Victory, off limits to the Royal Navy after sailors became rowdy. "They literally wrecked the joint," says Perkins. "The lads need some place to go, but there's no need to run amuck in the town." The soldiers have little opportunity to unwind, however; diversions are few, and young, single women are in short supply. Other kelpers talk about the problems of living under the joint civilian-military rule that was imposed after the war. Sir Rex Hunt, who carried the title of Governor before the invasion but who is now called Civil Commissioner, shares duties with Thorne. Says Veterinarian Whitely: "The military is not answerable to the public. They do what they bloody well want."

However the kelpers may feel about the British garrison, all remain united in their dislike for the Argentines. When the invasion began, Claude Molkenvuhr, 52, and his family fled from their 10,800-acre spread near Port Stanley to a farm 20 miles away. When they returned, they found their house a shambles. "They took everything," says Judy, Claude's wife. "They even pinched the children's toys. I don't dare cry because if I started I'd never stop." At the outbreak of the war, Molkenvuhr owned more than 3,000 sheep; now he has only 900. Says he: "We should be shearing now, but there is nothing."

The Argentines did leave behind some unwanted mementos: two-thirds of Molkenvuhr's property is off bounds because it has been studded with mines. It is unknown how many of the lethal explosives have been scattered around the islands. A squadron of 180 bomb experts combs the land, and so far, a total of 1.8 million fragments of mines, grenades and shells have been uncovered. Maps outlining dangerous zones are marked: "These areas are known to contain mines and booby traps. DO NOT ENTER." Even so, the risk remains great, especially for children and animals, and military officials predict that many of the bombs will never be found.

Some aspects of the Falklands' somnolent life have not changed. There is no television, though video-cassette players are proliferating (the most popular movies: *M*A*S*H* and *Julia*). The telephones have crank handles and are operated by a sole switchboard. The brightly painted clapboard houses are heated with bricks of black peat stored in sheds near kitchen doors, and Land Rovers are the most popular means of transportation. The largest store is run by the Falkland Islands Co., which owns more than 43%

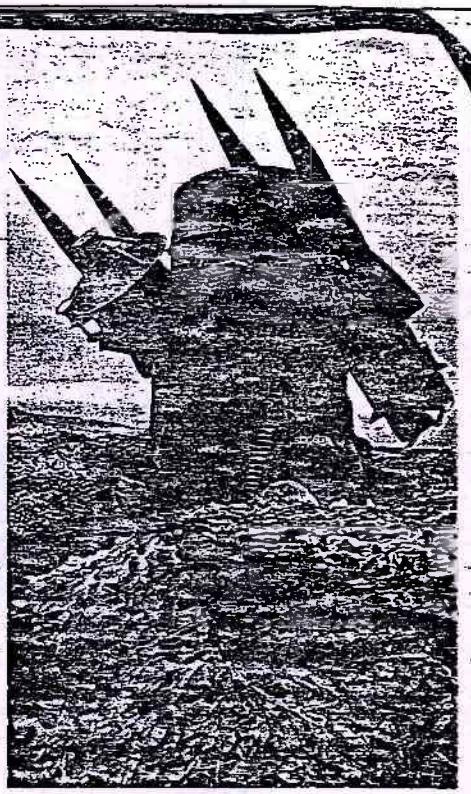


A group of young Falklanders strolls past the police headquarters in Port Stanley

Civil Commissioner Sir Rex Hunt

Photographs for TIME by Graham Bound

Some things never change: the well-kept, bountiful garden of a Port Stanley resident



Rapier antiaircraft missiles near the airport

of the land and employs 240 workers. Mutton, delivered to homes twice a week, is [illegible] referred to as "the 365," meaning that people roast it and stew it and chew it 365 days a year. One happy result of the war is that the Falklanders decided to start a weekly newspaper, the *Penguin News*. Another welcome consequence: demand for colorful Falkland Islands stamps (printed in England) has grown so much that the government earned more last year from foreign philatelists than from the income taxes kelpers pay.

Hunt predicts that life will return to normal once all the soldiers are moved into military accommodations. Prefab wooden camps are being built outside Port Stanley, while the first "coastel," a barge stacked with metal freighter containers and able to house 930 men, has been installed. Construction of a new "strategic airport" that will be able to handle jumbo jets scheduled to begin in October. Because no flights are allowed from Argentina, the Falklands are even more isolated than they were before the war. Visitors arriving by air must take a slow, cumbersome C-130 Royal Air Force Hercules transport plane from Ascension Island, 4,000 miles to the north. Only passengers with "urgent or high-priority circumstances" are permitted to book seats. The flight, which costs $2,970 round trip, takes up to 14 hours and involves tricky midair refueling. If the crosswinds at Stanley Airport are too fierce, the mission is scrubbed and the plane heads back to Ascension.

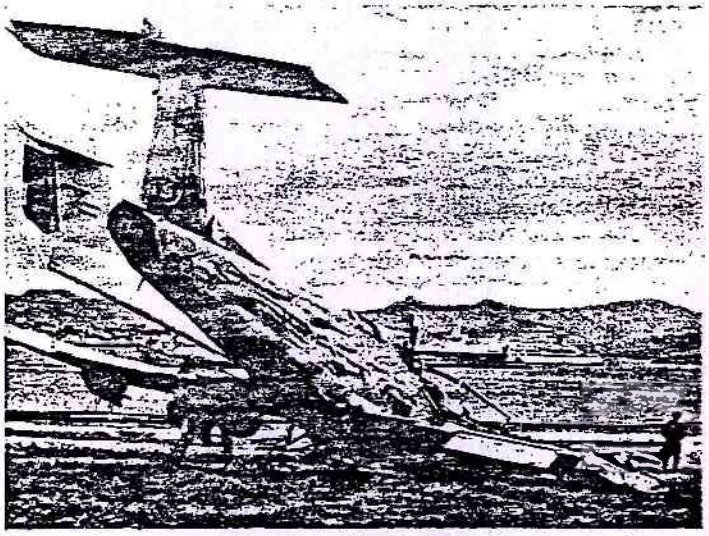
Despite the mood of melancholy resignation, the kelpers remain grateful for the British presence. "They are far more concerned about the Argies," says Councilor John Cheek. "People here worry about a sneak air raid or a commando landing. To prevent that, they'll put up with almost anything."

Such fears are not unfounded. The Argentines remain determined to avenge their humiliating defeat. The military regime refuses to admit formally that the war is over, and it has declared April 2 a national holiday. As Argentina prepares to vote for a civilian government in October, politicians of all stripes sound the same theme, calling the islands by their Spanish name: "The Malvinas are ours."

To prevent another invasion, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has pledged to defend what has become known as Fortress Falklands at an estimated cost of $2.79 billion over the next three years, or more than $1.5 million per kelper. Despite a Gallup poll indicating that 53% of the British felt the islands were not worth keeping at such high expense, Thatcher resolutely refuses to retrench or to negotiate the future sovereignty of the islands with Argentina.

To show their thanks, the kelpers next month will welcome 550 relatives of some of the 255 British soldiers who died in the war. Arriving by cruise ship from Uruguay, the visitors will spend three days touring Port Stanley and visiting the graves of their loved ones. A request for a similar trip by the relatives of the some 400 dead Argentine soldiers buried on Falklands soil has been turned down. The war, in its own way, goes on. —*By James Kelly. Reported by Gavin Scott/Port Stanley*

British soldiers check for mines buried by the Argentines



Grim reminder: carcass of an Argentine Pucará at Stanley airstrip

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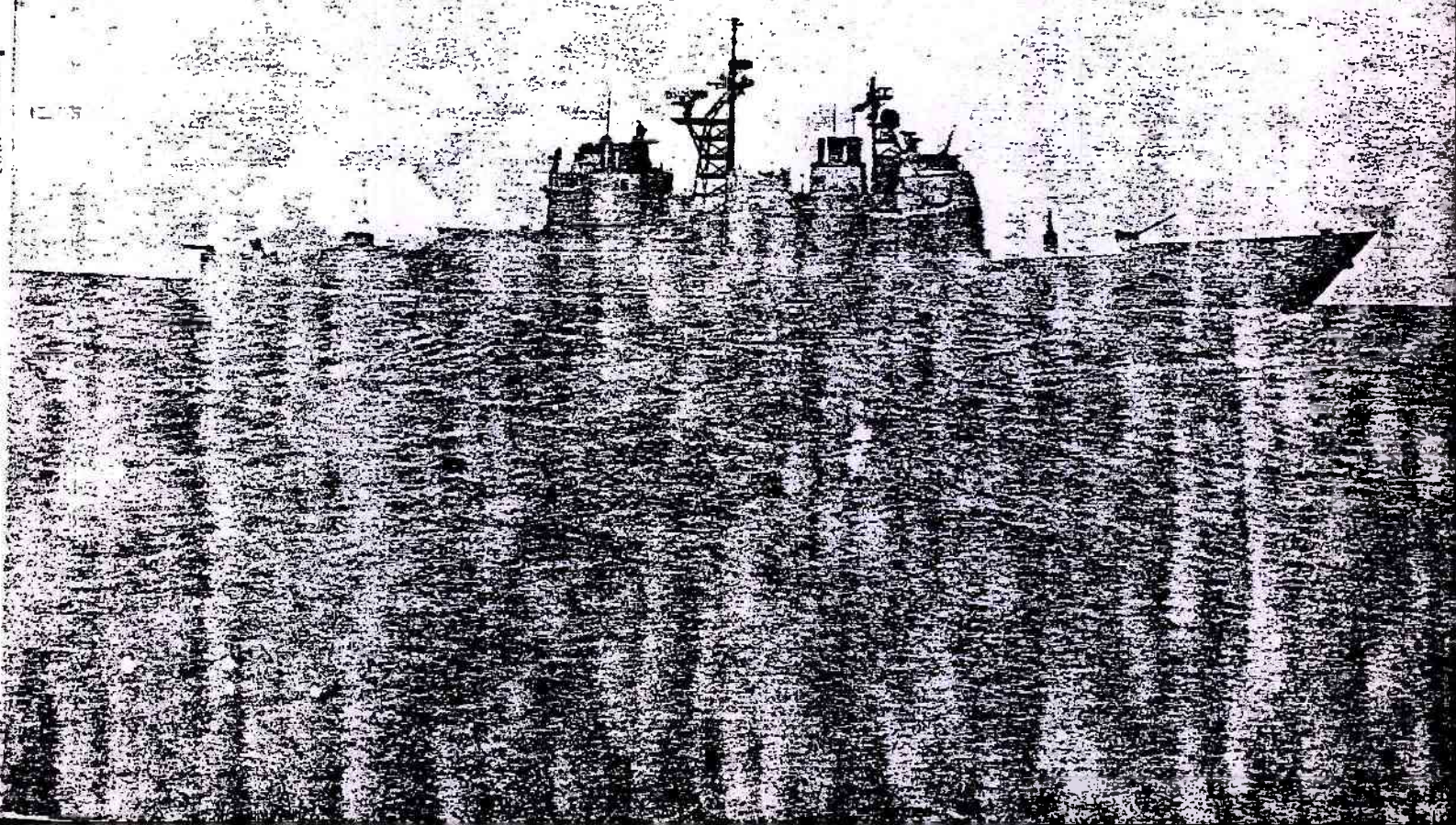

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deployment of enemy sea-based fighter/AEW defenses will reduce TacAir's present mobility advantage and increase the cost of performing targeting and other strike support functions with aircraft or subsonic cruise missiles. On the other hand, the "stealth" concept could extend the use of tactical strike aircraft well into the 21st century.

Several actions must be taken to preserve U. S. superiority over the Soviet Navy in antisurface warfare:

- The introduction of HARM, Maverick, the improved Harpoon, and TASM must not be delayed. These weapons are needed to counter the advanced defenses now being installed on the *Kirov*-class battle cruisers and other Soviet ships.
- Despite the introduction of standoff weapons, tactical aircraft will need to operate within enemy threat envelopes at times. The self-protection equipment on our aircraft must be improved greatly to provide full threat coverage, more convenient operation, and automatic response to the most imminent threat.
- An equivalent to the canceled A-6E all-weather standoff attack and control system (AWSACS) should be introduced as soon as possible. This system would enable classification of surface targets from significant standoff ranges and permit the Intruder to furnish cruise missiles with terminal guidance information. TASM should be modified to accept a terminal guidance update from AWSACS.
- The Tomahawk and Harpoon must be provided with self-protection features to enhance their survivability against the emerging Soviet defenses.
- A nuclear-capable standoff strike weapon is urgently needed. Navy TacAir must be prepared to operate in the nuclear environment. Navy TacAir's present nuclear strike capability will be inadequate against future defenses.
- An air-launched supersonic antiship missile with a range of at least 100 nautical miles should be developed.
- A supersonic, air-targeted follow-on to the TASM should be developed.
- A maximum effort should be invested in developing an antiship terminal guidance system for tactical ballistic missiles.

Navy TacAir no longer has a monopoly on the surface strike mission, and the utility of tactical aircraft for ASUW in the distant future is uncertain. For the next few decades, however, tactical aircraft armed with sophisticated sensors and standoff weapons and supplemented by increasing numbers of surface-launched missiles will be needed to maintain the U. S. Navy's preeminence in antisurface warfare.

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[2]Lieutenant Richard T. McCrillis, USN. "An Insider's Look at the Navy's Main Battery." *Proceedings*, July 1981, p. 104.
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Commander Nutwell contributed to the writing of NWP-51, "Air Tactics for Sea Control," and is a former commanding officer of VA-105. Currently, he is the attack readiness officer on the staff of Commander Naval Air Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet.

Postscript: The Falklands War

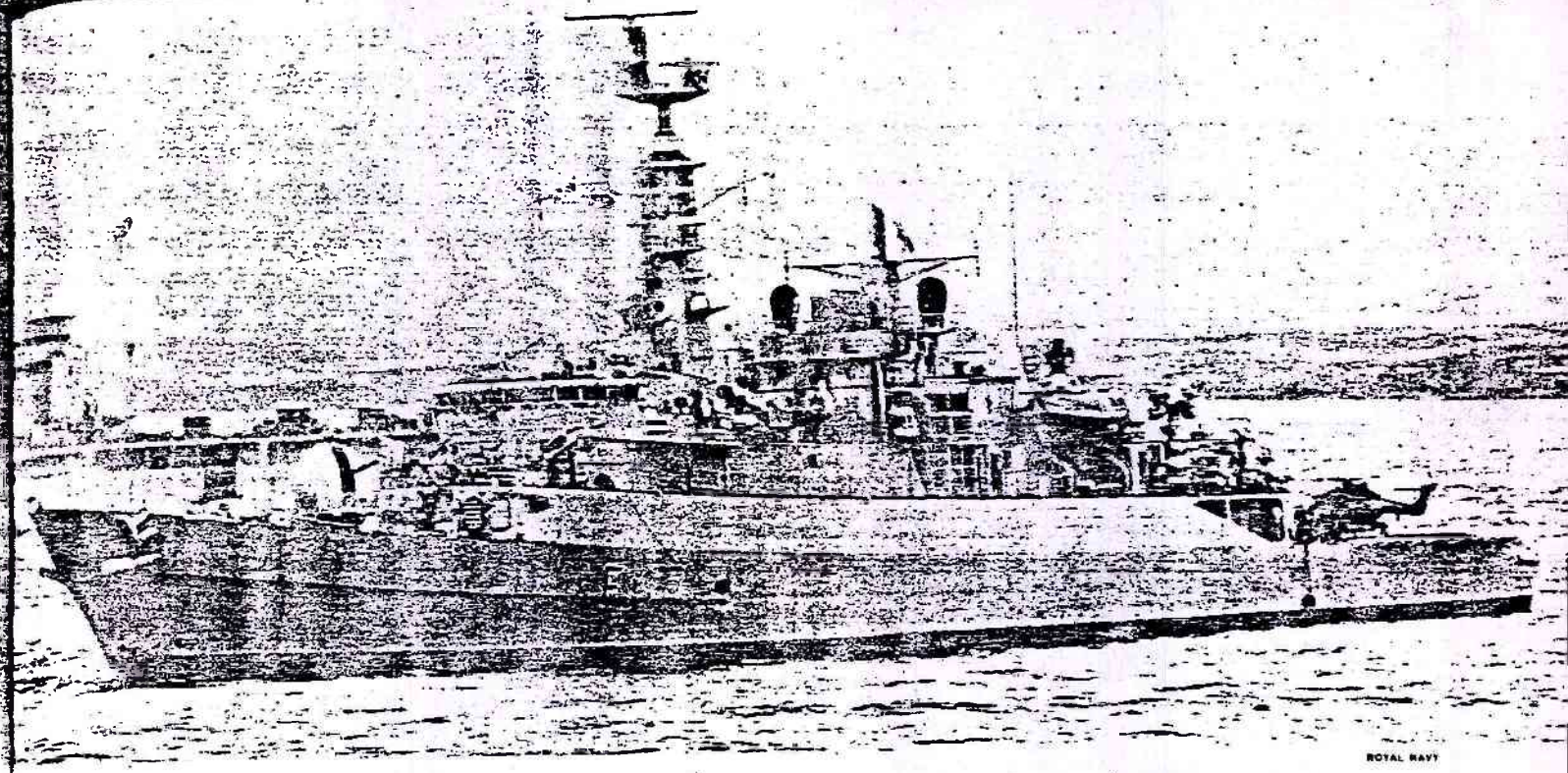
By Commander Robert M. Nutwell, U.S. Navy

The antisurface campaign waged by the Argentine Air Force in the Falklands War provides an opportunity to assess some of the issues raised in the foregoing article. Argentine air raids sank six British ships (two destroyers, two frigates, an assault ship, and a containership) and damaged several others. Two of the sinkings (HMS *Sheffield* and the *Atlantic Conveyor*) are credited to the French Exocet air-to-surface missile—the remainder to "iron bombs." Another six ships probably would have been sunk or seriously damaged had the bombs with which they were struck been adequately fuzed for extremely low-altitude delivery. Air raids forced the British carriers to operate outside the range of the Argentine Air Force, degrading the air cover provided to the British landing forces.

The Argentine Air Force paid a heavy price for these successes: airborne losses were about 75 aircraft. Eighteen kills were made by Royal Navy surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), one by naval gunfire, 19 by land-based SAMs, six by small arms, and 31 by British Harriers. Based on 505 combat sorties, the average attrition rate per sortie was 15%. However, 261 sorties were turned back by British defenses or other factors. Thus, about 30% of the aircraft penetrating British defenses were killed.[1]

Several observations can be drawn from the results of the air-to-surface battle in the Falklands:

Effectiveness of Air Strikes with Close-in Weapons: The Argentine Air Force demonstrated an impressive



HMS **Antelope** ***limps into San Carlos with a hole torn in her hull by an unexploded bomb and a broken antenna hit by the wing of an Argentine Skyhawk. One of two improperly fused Argentine bombs on board later exploded and sank the frigate.***

combat capability using close-in attacks with "iron bombs." With only slight improvement in the military equation (e.g., better fuzes and better self-protection equipment or defense suppression), the air raids might have forced the British task force to withdraw. The implication is that, while significant attrition can be expected from modern air defenses, air attack with close-in weapons remains a lethal tactic against surface vessels.

Effectiveness of Standoff Weapons: The results of the Argentine Exocet attacks illustrate both the potential and limitations of standoff weapons and of guided missiles in general. Of six Exocets launched, two of them sank ships; one other hit was achieved—a glancing blow on HMS *Glamorgan*—by a shore-launched missile at Port Stanley.[2] Furthermore, it appears that no Argentine aircraft were lost in Exocet attacks. However, the missile that hit the *Atlantic Conveyor* was diverted by chaff from its intended target,[3] demonstrating the vulnerability of standoff weapons to countermeasures. Also, Exocets could not be used to attack the vessels in Falkland Sound supporting the Port San Carlos assault, because of the proximity of land mass that restricted approach paths and prevented seeker target acquisition.

Relevance to the U.S. Navy: The Royal Navy provides a reasonably good analogue for the Soviet Navy in terms of air defense capabilities. Both navies have very capable surface-to-air systems, but integral air cover is limited to vertical/short takeoff and landing aircraft without airborne early warning support. The point defense systems on most of the British ships in the Falklands War were inferior to the Soviet ADMG-630 and SA-N-4 systems. (Only a few Royal Navy ships were equipped with the modern Sea Wolf point defense missile system.) However, the British air cover was much more effective than the Soviet Yak-36 "Forgers" deployed on board *Kiev*-class carriers might be, for two reasons. The Blue Fox radar, vectored-thrust maneuverability, and AIM-9L missles on the British Harriers give them a greater air-to-air capability than the "Forger." In addition, the Argentine aircraft were limited in their ability to maneuver for self-defense because they were operating at extreme range. The differences in point defense and air-to-air capabilities between the British and Soviet navies tend to cancel each other, so that on balance the two navies possess a roughly equivalent air defense capability.

The damage achieved by the Argentines is considered illustrative of what U.S. Navy TacAir would inflict on Soviet surface forces. Beyond this, the Argentine Air Force does not provide a good analogue for U. S. Navy TacAir because its aircraft lacked modern self-protection equipment and defense-suppression support. Also, the requirement for the Argentines to operate at extreme range should have allowed the British to concentrate their defenses in a narrow threat sector. In sum, the attrition of U.S. Navy TacAir against equivalent forces is expected to be considerably lower than that experienced by the Argentine Air Force in the Falklands campaign. My estimate of 10-20% attrition in U.S. Navy strikes against current Soviet combatants appears consistent with the results of the Falklands War.

The results of the Argentine antisurface campaign in the Falklands War support the contention that U.S. Navy TacAir remains a potent instrument against the Soviet surface fleet. Attack with close-in strike weapons is still a viable tactic against the current generation of Soviet surface combatants (except the *Kirov*). Standoff weapons, such as Harpoon, despite their limitations, promise to extend the tactical utility of manned aircraft against the most heavily defended targets by reducing aircraft attrition to acceptable levels.

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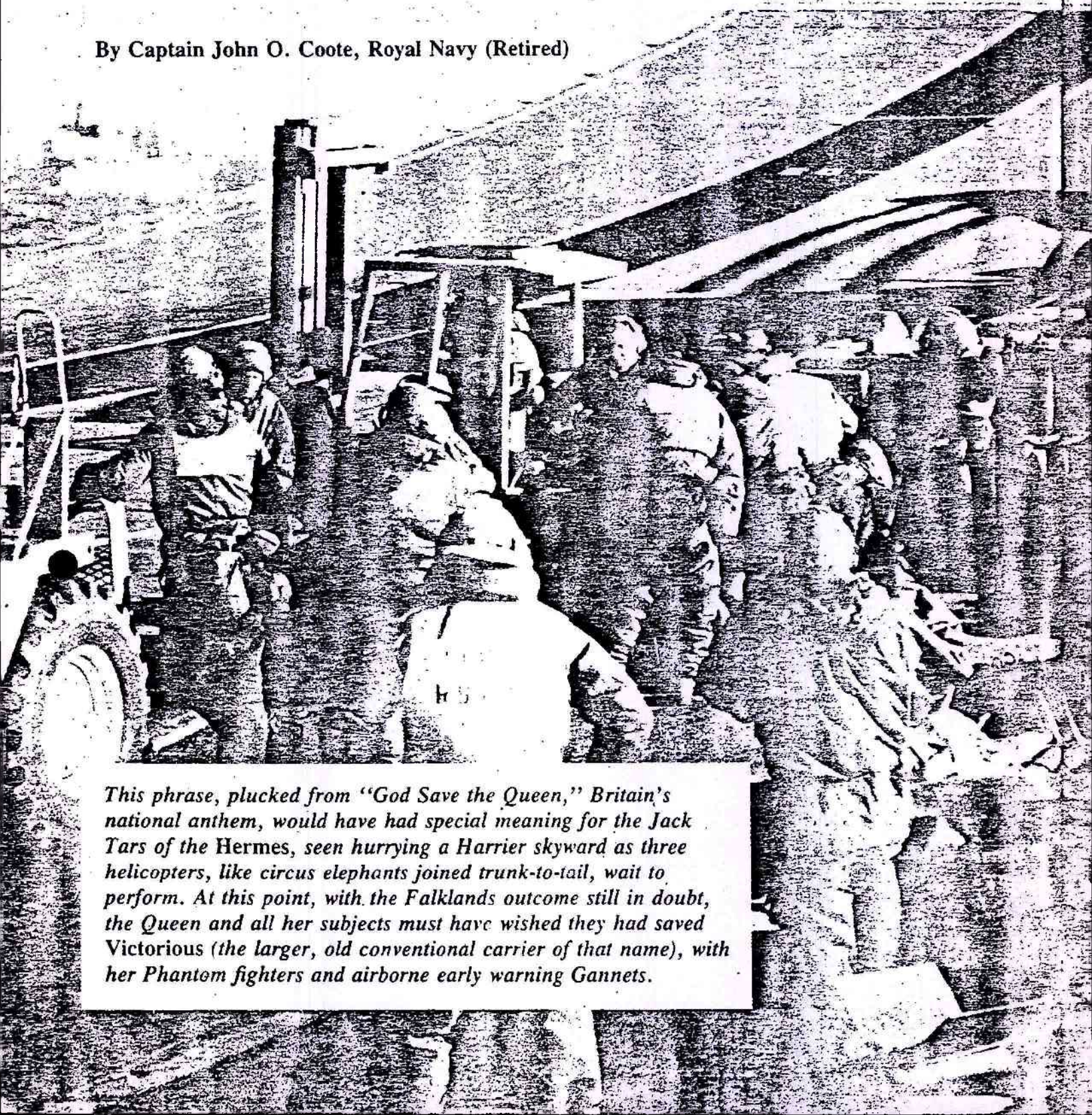
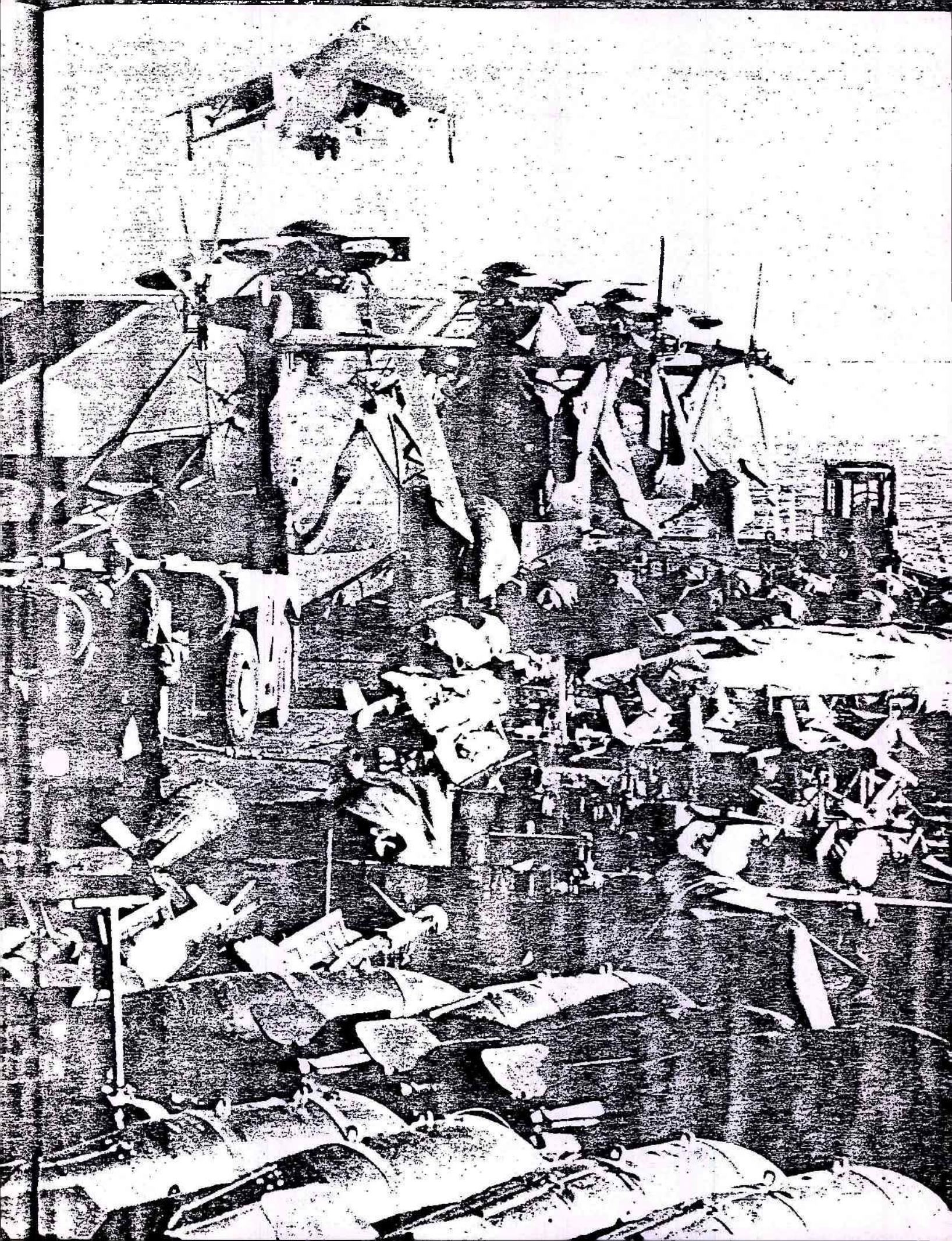
[1]Data on Argentine sortie rate/losses and British naval losses from Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Falklands Crisis: Emerging Lessons for Power Projection and Force Planning," *Armed Forces Journal*, vol. 120, no. 1, September 1982.
[2]Lawrence Freedman, "The War of the Falkland Islands, 1982," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 61, no. 1, Fall 1982, p. 205.
[3]Ibid., p. 205.

"Send Her Victorious . . ."

By Captain John O. Coote, Royal Navy (Retired)



This phrase, plucked from "God Save the Queen," Britain's national anthem, would have had special meaning for the Jack Tars of the Hermes, *seen hurrying a Harrier skyward as three helicopters, like circus elephants joined trunk-to-tail, wait to perform. At this point, with the Falklands outcome still in doubt, the Queen and all her subjects must have wished they had saved* Victorious *(the larger, old conventional carrier of that name), with her Phantom fighters and airborne early warning Gannets.*



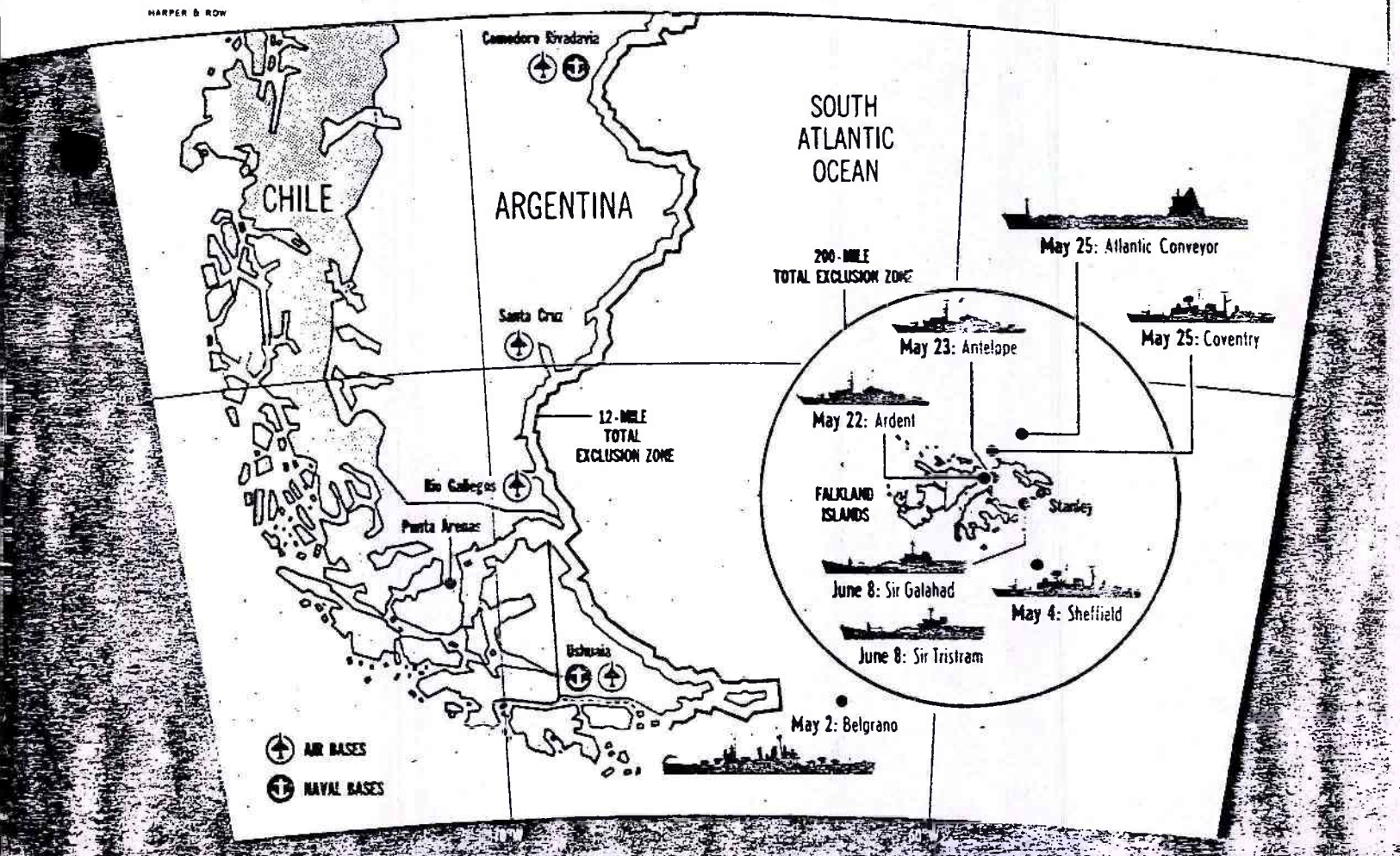
There is a new mood in Britain. Morale is up. Suddenly, everyone knows once again what the Royal Navy means to an island dependent for its survival on keeping the sea-lanes open. The Falklands campaign—the first national military compaign to be launched from the British Isles without the support of allies since World War I—was a success. The details of how this feat was accomplished merit review.

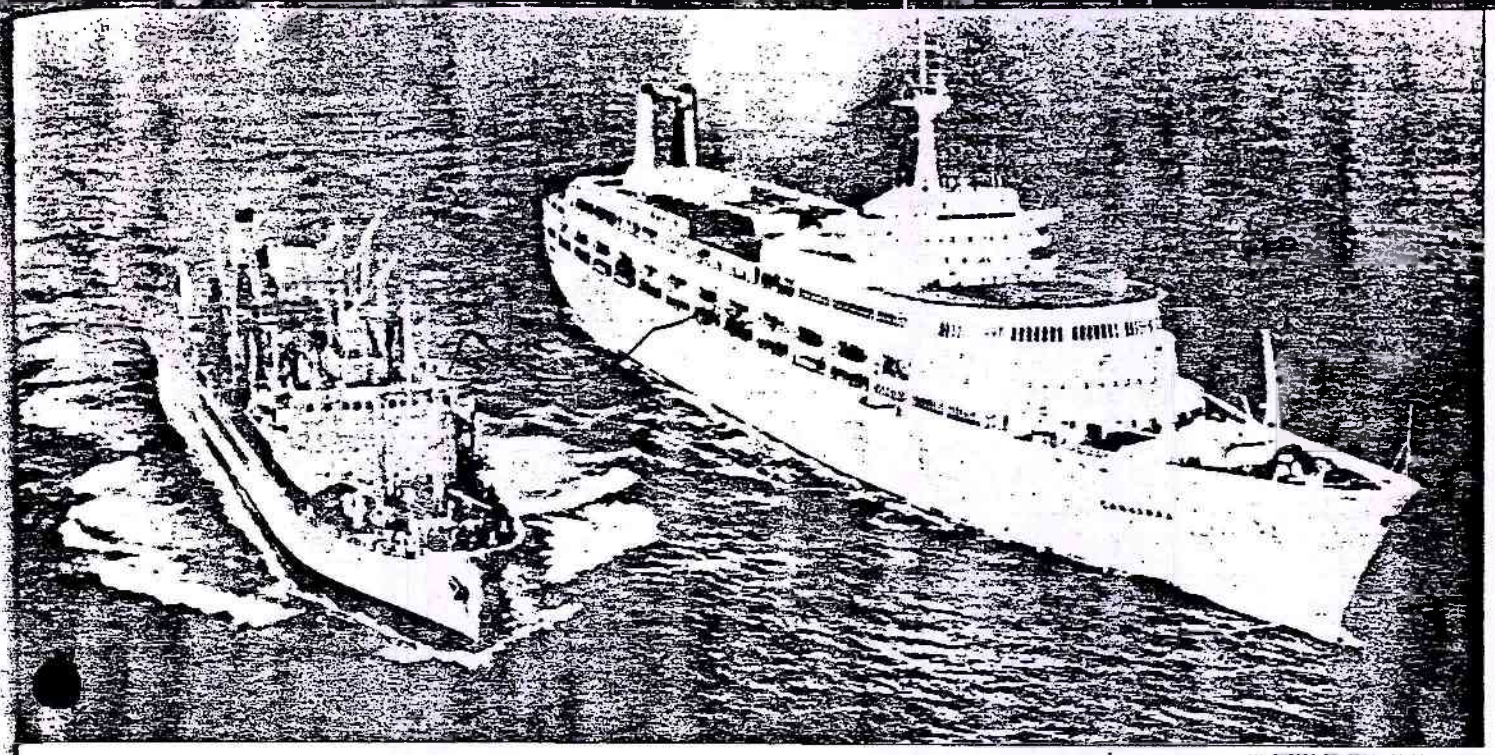
Command and Control: If ever the men and the event met at the right moment, it was those who found themselves in charge of the Falklands campaign. The unflappable Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse, Commander-in-Chief Fleet and, in other circumstances, CinCEastLant, from whose underground headquarters in suburban Northwood the victory was planned and conducted as "Operation Corporate," reached his high position after a career of impeccably suitable experience. He was the first Flag Officer Submarines to have commanded a nuclear attack submarine and a squadron of nuclear ballistic missile submarines; he was executive officer of HMS *Hermes*; he commanded NATO's showcase Standing Naval Force, Atlantic, followed by a spell at the Ministry of Defence (MoD) as Controller of the Navy responsible for ships and weapons.

During his tour at the MoD, he had reason to understand the humiliation suffered by his service chief, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Henry Leach, who bore the brunt of political infighting which led to the recent decimation of our surface fleet through budget cuts. In 1981, Navy Minister Keith Speed spoke out publicly against this trend. Not only was he summarily fired, but his office was abolished, along with those of the other two service ministers. They were replaced by tri-service functional junior ministers. The organization thus established was a mismatch with that governing the fighting services. For example, the services do not have one officer responsible for all procurement across the board. On top of that, a few weeks before Task Force-317 sailed for the Falklands, the terms of reference of the Chiefs of Staff Committee were radically altered. The three professional heads of the fighting services were downgraded to nonvoting advisers to the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS).

By a stroke of luck, the Chief of the Defence Staff happened to be a sailor, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Terence Lewin. He was in New Zealand when General Leopoldo Galtieri marched, so he did not pick up the reins of his high office until some irrevocable decisions had been made. A particularly low-profile, no-nonsense sailor, Admiral Lewin may not have caught the eye of the media or the public, but he used his authority to ensure that Admiral Fieldhouse and his staff were left to run the operation without outside interference. This proved to be entirely beneficial, as did the rapport and mutual respect which developed between Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the C-in-C at Northwood.

Public Opinion: Before the fleet departed, it was



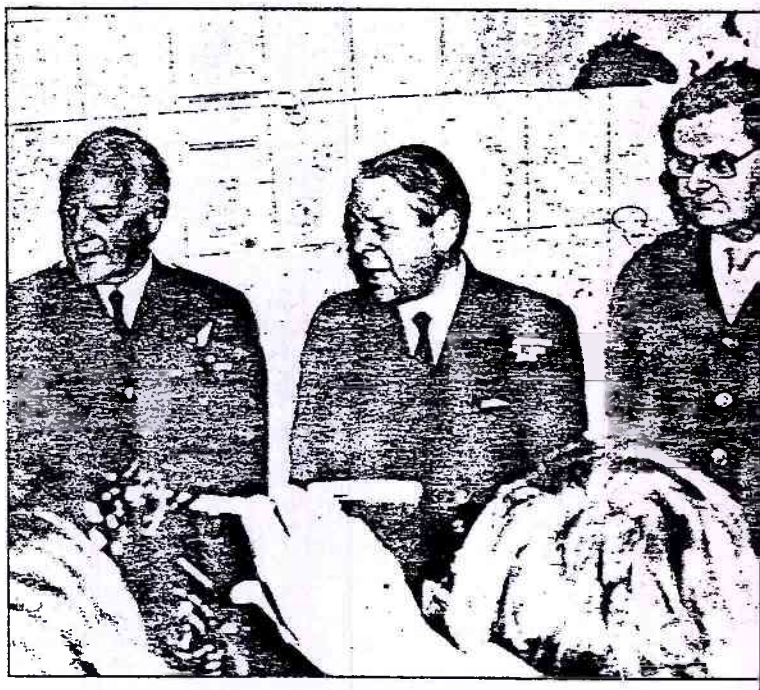


ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROYAL NAVY

not only the Royal Navy's morale which was at a low ebb. A significant section of the public—three million of them unemployed—feared that England might not qualify for the final stages of the soccer World Cup, while the Argentines were firm favorites to retain the title they won in 1978. This seems irrelevant, but it *was* a factor which determined public support for taking such extreme measures to rescue 1,800 "kelpers" from driving on the wrong side of the road and having their children taught Spanish. When the task force sailed, it did so with overwhelming public support.

A Close Call: The old Iron Duke rightly described Waterloo as ". . . the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life." But he spoke only of how the dice fell during a few hours of confused cannon fire and bayonet fighting. The C-in-C at Northwood and the Prime Minister walked the high-wire of uncertainty for more than six weeks. Anything might have happened if the Argentine bombs had been properly fused for the low-level attacks which our ships' missile envelopes forced them into, or if their air forces had not inexplicably allowed our hard-pressed amphibious warfare forces at San Carlos a day's respite after D day, when HMS *Ardent* was sunk and four other frigates badly damaged. All along, there was the nagging thought that the press-on Argentine pilots with Exocet missiles might disable HMS *Invincible*, HMS *Hermes*, or the 44,000-ton cruise liner turned assault ship *Canberra*. Any of these events could have aborted the operation, reducing it to a humiliating fiasco. The obvious solution of taking out the enemy's mainland airfields was denied to the on-scene commander, Rear Admiral Sandy Woodward, in deference to world opinion.

The Opposing Forces: Then there was the enemy's navy, which might be expected to be spurred on by the courage of the Mirage pilots, whose life expectancy soon fell to two-and-one-half sorties.



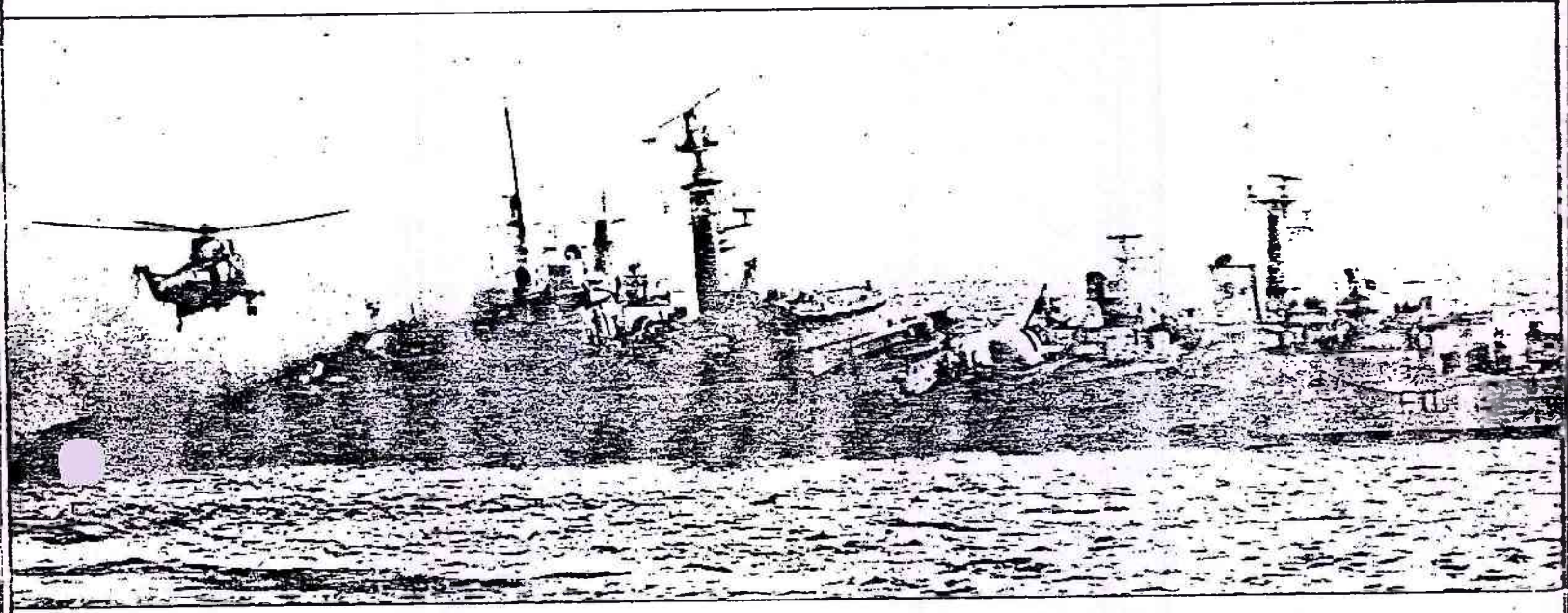
Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse, since promoted to First Sea Lord, fielded questions from a British press that was desperate for news of the fighting but indifferent to details of innovative logistics measures required to keep the fleet off the Falklands.

Prima facie, there was not much to be worried about against the Argentine Navy's ex-British light aircraft carrier *Veinticinco De Mayo* with Skyhawk fighter-bombers, the 42-year-old light cruiser *General Belgrano* (ex-USS *Phoenix* [CL-46]), two modern British-designed "Type-42" destroyers, and seven old ex-U. S. destroyers—all built toward the end of World

War II. But they were known to have been updated with Exocet missiles and modern radars. Had they chanced a coordinated air-sea attack on TF-317 in the early days, it might have been a close call, since the Royal Navy surface forces never amounted to more than 18 combatant ships, of which four were sunk and two seriously damaged early in the conflict. Furthermore, the task force had no airborne early warning (AEW) capability, although a few Nimrod missions were flown from Ascension Island along the coast of Argentina, using a makeshift in-flight refueling capability put together in a matter of days.

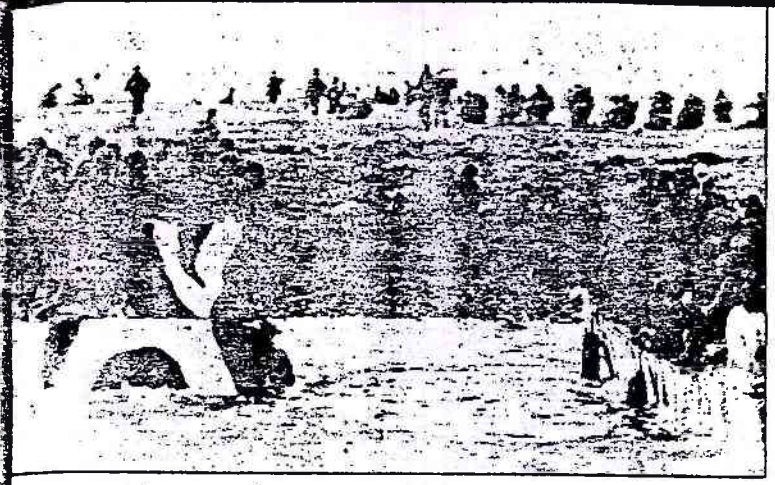
Available satellite surveillance was by no means satisfactory or reliable. It is true that the Sea Harrier vertical or short takeoff and landing (V/STOL) strike aircraft were about to write a new word into the history of air warfare—VIFF (vectoring in forward flight). This tactic involved abruptly dropping out of the sights of a pursuing Mirage and then popping up under the enemy's tail to shoot a Sidewinder missile straight into his glowing afterburner. The Sea Harriers scored 24 kills out of 27 missiles fired, tearing the heart out of the Argentine air forces. But the Sea Harriers had little to offer as night interceptors or in low visibility, of which there was plenty.

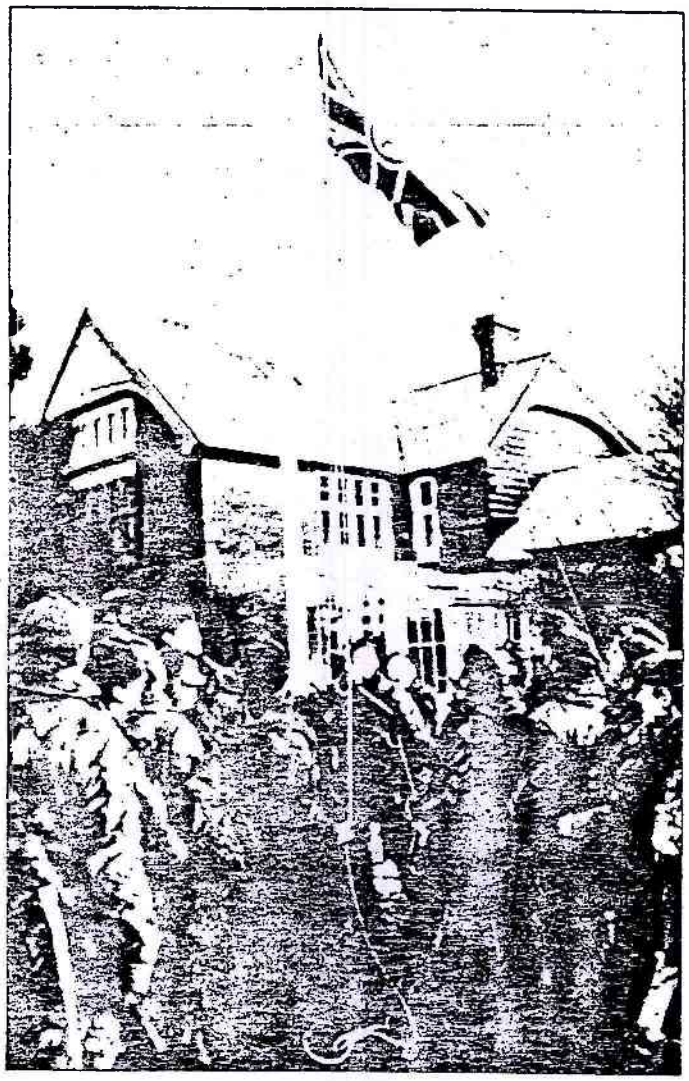
Although the 4,000-foot runway at Port Stanley was hit during a high-level sortie by a lone Vulcan on a 7,000-mile mission and sporadically blasted by naval gunfire, it was never out of action long. Low-flying C-130s brought in reinforcements and supplies almost nightly up to the end. The dummy craters which the Argentines bulldozed onto the strip each morning for the benefit of overflying photo-reconnaissance sorties fooled no one who recalled that airfields, like railroad tracks, were seldom put out of action for more than a few hours by air bombardment on a far heavier scale during World War II.



To those who predicted a "comic opera" war, D day of the amphibious landing at San Carlos must have been startling with the loss of HMS Ardent, *above, and the severe damaging of four other frigates. But the Royal Marines pushed ashore in a scene reminiscent of World War II, slogged across East Falkland Island to Stanley, and raised the Falklands flag. The instrument of surrender had contained a word describing the terms that the fathers of these bulldog Brits had rallied behind in the 1940s—"unconditionally." But the word was struck out and initialed by the commander of the Argentine Forces.*

Underwater, it was a different and probably decisive matter. The Royal Navy deployed four nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs) with some of the finest sensing equipment in the world, as well as one conventional attack submarine, against two ex-U. S. *Guppy*-class and two ten-year-old West German-designed diesel submarines. Little has been released on the British submarine operations, but it may be presumed that at least one SSN would have been permanently stationed in the vicinity of the two carriers as a sonar picket—a technique first demonstrated to the Royal Navy in 1958 by the USS *Nautilus* (SSN-571) during "Operation Rum Tub." Once the hapless *Santa Fe* (ex-USS *Catfish* [SS-





Headquarters, Land Forces
Falkland Islands

INSTRUMENT OF SURRENDER

I, the undersigned, Commander of all the Argentine land, sea and air forces in the Falkland Islands hereby surrender to Major General J. J. MOORE CB OBE MC as representative of her Brittanic Majesty's Government.

Under the terms of this surrender all Argentinian personnel in the Falkland Islands are to muster at assembly points which will be designated by General Moore and hand over their arms, ammunition, and all other weapons and warlike equipment as directed by General Moore or appropriate British officers acting on his behalf.

Following the surrender all personnel of the Argentinian Forces will be treated with honour in accordance with the conditions set out in the Geneva Convention of 1949. They will obey any directions concerning movement and in connection with accommodation.

This surrender is to be effective from 2359 hours ZULU on 14 June 2059 hours local) and includes those Argentine Forces presently deployed in and around Port Stanley, those others on East Falkland, West Falkland and all the outlying islands.

Commander Argentine Forces

J. J. MOORE
Major General

Witness

2359 hours 14 June 1982

339]) had been disposed of by a good old-fashioned depth charge dropped from a chopper off South Georgia, there were no confirmed submarine contacts near the task force throughout the campaign.

HMS *Conqueror*'s encounter with the cruiser *General Belgrano* and her two destroyer escorts turned out to be of crucial importance. The *Conqueror* first reported the cruiser as she approached from the west, outside the Total Exclusion Zone (TEZ). Northwood knew that two of the Argentine ships were armed with Exocet surface-to-surface missiles and were part of an end-around maneuver aimed at our carriers, so the SSN was ordered to sink the cruiser, if need be, outside the TEZ. After tracking the *General Belgrano* for almost a day, the *Conqueror* let her have it with a salvo of World War II-vintage Mk-VIII torpedoes from close range. Our submarine was depth charged by the escorts before they disappeared over the horizon, leaving more than 300 of the cruiser's ship's company to die of exposure. The submarine was under orders not to interfere with any Argentine rescue operations. The corresponding pincer maneuver around the northern end of the TEZ perimeter by the *Veinticinco de Mayo* and her escorts was thwarted by her aircraft being grounded by fog and, of course, by the news of the *Belgrano* sinking.

The Argentine fleet never put to sea again, much to the chagrin of the other SSNs waiting for them. So the *Conqueror* is the only submarine to return to base flying the "Jolly Roger" since VJ day.

The Decline of the Royal Navy: To understand the extent of the Royal Navy's and the nation's comeback from a nadir of low morale to the victorious moment when the Instrument of Surrender was signed on terms dictated by Royal Marine Major General Jeremy Moore, one needs to hark back to the 1956 Suez operation. That painful and humiliating retreat has haunted British military men.

Opposed by our closest ally, isolated by world opinion, and undermined by political bets being hedged within the Cabinet, the forces on the spot had victory snatched from under their noses by their political masters.

Following the Suez operation, Britain's naval forces declined steadily. Henceforth, East of Suez was to be off limits, except, of course, when circumstances or political expediency dictated otherwise. For years, there was the thankless Beira Patrol in the Mozambique Channel. Today, we ensure the safe passage of oil to the West from Iran and Iraq. Strike carriers were allowed to run on for a decade, but eventually were no longer assigned a significant wartime role. One by one, they were towed away to the breakers' yards. The Royal Navy's political and military chiefs resigned on the issue, but no one seemed to care or even remember their sacrifice.

But a new breed of naval aviators emerged: antisubmarine warfare (ASW) helicopter crews of exceptional skill and bravery, backed by a handful of Sea Harrier pilots operating from carriers which have ski-jumps instead of catapults—the angled deck became a chopper park.

By March 1982, we had only one of these new ships in commission, the *Invincible*, and she already had a "sold" sticker on her island. She was booked for the Royal Australian Navy in a half-price deal as part of Minister of Defence John Nott's "Defence Review."* Underlying it all was the decision to pay for the whole U. K. Trident nuclear-powered ballistic submarine (SSBN) program out of current navy funds, ensuring a further steady reduction in the surface fleet over the next ten years. This led to a growing, but unspoken, opposition to the SSBN among the members of the Naval Staff.

The depth and seriousness of the cuts in the "Defence Review" are starkly apparent when one compares the inventory of ships in commission in the December 1981 issue of *Broadsheet*—the annual report from the First Sea Lord—against the preceding year, excluding ships in reserve. (See table.) In addition, mid-life overhauls for about half the frigates were to be cancelled.

The NATO Role: Apart from a Mickey Mouse Fishery Protection Squadron and a few other minor inshore forces, Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic (SACLant), sees the Royal Navy as a small ASW force destined to protect the first European resupply convoy between Madeira and the English Channel. The Royal Navy's ability to do so is already in question. Britain's remaining overseas dependencies in the Caribbean, South Atlantic, and Indian Ocean lie outside NATO boundaries, and their protection has been left by the planners to such ad hoc support as can be cobbled together from time to time. The 30 surface ships usually available in service were organized into three flotillas, each of which, in turn, went on worldwide training and flag-showing deployment to serve notice that the Royal Navy could still come up with a few ships in front-line service. In 1981, one such visit was planned to the Falkland Islands when some members of Parliament insisted that Galtieri meant business. As for the lack of naval strike aircraft, that was no concern of the admirals, since the Air Staff had affirmed its ability to take over the carriers' strike role anywhere in the world, although it is unlikely that the Falklands ever entered their contingency planning.

	September 1980	*December 1981*
Carriers	3	2*
LPDs	2	2*
DLGs	14	11 + 3*
FFGs	48	36 + 12*
SSBNs	4	4
SSNs	11	12
SSKs	16	16

*Earmarked for disposal within two years.

Ships Taken Up From Trade (STUFT): The incredible speed with which 54 merchant ships were requisitioned for conversion to military use over one weekend was not the fruit of years of carefully laid plans. Arapaho—the concept of basing fleet aircraft on board merchant ships—had been advocated by farsighted planners on the Naval Staff in the late 1960s, but got nowhere because it would divert funds from ships flying the White Ensign. The STUFT operation was, like much else in "Operation Corporate," brilliant improvisation at relatively low levels in the Admiralty. Freed from financial constraints and the bureaucracy of the Procurement Executive, a captain in the Division of Naval Operations and Trade put most of the force together by a series of telephone calls to shipowners, many of whom were delighted to have their loss-makers or idle tonnage chartered at better than market terms. The Admiralty put together a fleet of more than half a million tons, not counting the 21 Royal Fleet Auxiliaries and other ships wearing the Blue Ensign. Many of them were on the "for sale" list. One left on her moorings was the Royal Yacht *Britannia*, originally built on the pretext of being available as a hospital ship in times of crisis, but found wanting when her moment came.

The civilian crews who manned this fleet did not confine their rewards to warm feelings of patriotism and the gratitude of the public: The *Canberra*'s departure with her cargo of Royal Marine Commandos

*The Naval Institute published a detailed analysis of the "Defence Review" in John E. Woods's "The Royal Navy Since World War II." *Proceedings*, March 1982, pp. 82-90.

and paratroopers was delayed while the unions hammered out a better pay deal for their members for every day spent south of Ascension Island. A junior deckhand flashed his paycheck in front of a naval petty officer the day before they got back to Southampton after three months at sea. After all deductions it was for £7,400 (approximately $14,800).

Nevertheless, there is plenty of evidence that the merchant seamen exposed to the real dangers of "bomb alley" off San Carlos stood their ground as resolutely as their forebears did on Malta or Murmansk convoys. The logistics were awe-inspiring. More than 9,500 troops and 100,000 tons of supplies were put ashore before the end of the operation. Although merchantmen, other than the *Canberra*, were not primary targets, they did not escape the attention of Argentine pilots. The 15,000-ton containership *Atlantic Conveyor* was sunk by an Exocet which had been decoyed by chaff from HMS *Active*. Besides 11 of her crew, some vital stores went down with her, including three of the four heavy-lift Chinook helicopters, 2,000 feet of prefabricated metal runway destined to extend the Port Stanley strip, and 5,000 Arctic tents. Luckily, the Harriers had been flown off just before the missile hit, but all their spares went down with the ship.

The 5,500-ton *Elk*, normally a roll-on/roll-off (RO-RO) truck ferry, carried 2,500 tons of ammunition into San Carlos Bay, but was unable to offload during daylight hours because of constant air attacks. She was ordered to put to sea every dawn and hole up in the fog offshore, returning to the beach at dusk to unload more of her unstable cargo. On completion of her task some days later, the senior officer on the scene released her with the neat signal: "Manoeuver well executed. Arise, Sir Elk."

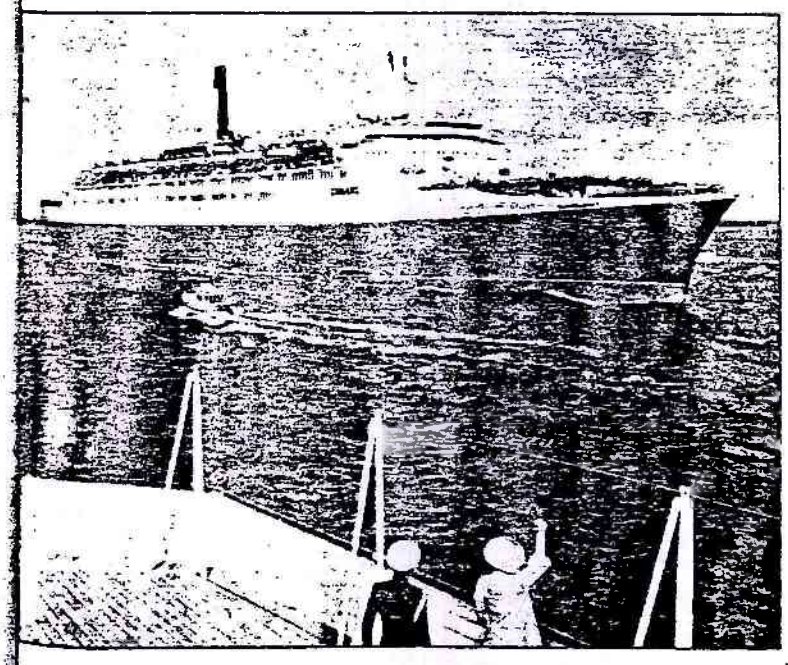
In the middle of a particularly fierce air attack, the 13,000-ton North Sea ferry *Norland* received a signal from the company's catering manager in Harwich demanding that the inventory of wines and spirits held in the after saloon bar be reported forthwith. "Three dozen gin, two dozen Scotch, six bottles of rum, and one Skyhawk" went the reply as an enemy aircraft exploded right on top of her.

The Good News and the Bad News: Inevitably, there were things which went wrong in an unrehearsed campaign of this nature. Most have been widely publicized. No matter how spiritedly their crews fought, our warships were ill-equipped and constructed for defense against wave-top attacks by aircraft or missiles. HMS *Sheffield* was sunk by an Exocet which failed to detonate, but sparked off an uncontrollable fire using in the first moments the rocket's unexploded fuel, before the ship's own fuel, plastic piping cable insulation, and furniture triggered off a holocaust.

The disaster at Bluff Cove, where 50 lives were lost in HMS *Sir Galahad*, need never have happened. If only the troops had been put ashore upon the ship's arrival, instead of being kept on board at anchor for several hours in broad daylight in full view of known Argentine observation posts, the air strike which got in under the Harrier combat air patrol would have hit too late.

But there was so much that went better than could ever have been expected. Within the serious limitations of weather and visibility, our 171 aircraft and choppers provided strong air support. The 32 Harriers flew more than 2,000 operational sorties, while the helicopters tripled as gunships, troop transports, and search-and-rescue units. One squadron, No. 802 (Sea Kings), flew 1,560 hours in May, the equivalent of having two choppers airborne around the clock throughout the month. More than 90% operational availability was achieved with all aircraft from start to finish.

For almost all the sailors involved, it was their first experience of combat; but our spearhead troops had been tuned up in Ulster and other theaters, where the Special Air Service (SAS), Royal Marine commandos, and paratroopers contrive to find almost continuous action in peacetime. The full story of our Special Forces may never be told, but everyone



How proud she must have been as she waved to the ship that bore not only her name but thousands of her fighting men home from the Falklands. And how touched she must have been to see the survivors of HMS* Coventry *assembled on the foredeck in their last muster, a living reminder of the cost of being victorious.

has his private scenario for what the Sea King was doing on a one-way mission to Tierra del Fuego the day before the San Carlos landings, right next door to a Super Entendard base. Tragically, on the same day, 18 members of the SAS went down in a chopper which flew into an albatross in the course of a routine ship-to-ship transfer.

Some members of the SAS went in two weeks before the task force arrived off the Falklands. On 26 May, the SAS troops were on the top of Mount Kent overlooking Port Stanley, two days before the 2nd Parachute Regiment seized Goose Green 30 miles nearer the main landing area. They were alone on that hilltop for nearly two weeks before being relieved by 42 Commando.

The SAS raid on Pebble Island in the West Falklands on 15 May was a classic and had a decisive effect on the final outcome. Sea Kings from the *Hermes* brought them in during hurricane-force winds and took the defenders completely by surprise. They destroyed all 11 Pucara counterinsurgency aircraft without loss to themselves, except for one wounded. With the flight characteristics of crop-dusters and versatile weapon pods, those 11 aircraft might have played havoc with our troops on their 40-mile march to Port Stanley, mostly over open ground. One way or another, we destroyed more than 100 Argentine aircraft. Shipborne missiles accounted for 19 of them.

Admiral Fieldhouse has been quoted as saying that the Royal Navy could have lost the campaign, but only the troops could win it by walking over the ground.

The Aftermath: Many questions are being asked, especially concerning the suitability of our ships and weapons. An inquiry team headed by a distinguished academic and former ambassador to Washington, Lord Franks, with half a dozen privy counsellors and sweeping powers, is charged with finding out why, or if, the Foreign Office, and thus the government, failed to take due notice of the stream of warnings they had of Galtieri's intentions.

In parallel, there is an All-Party Defence Committee in Parliament probing how the government information machine handled the news. It is known that, up to 17 May, not one of the uniformed public relations men in the Ministry of Defence was consulted about the bulletins being put out nightly by a civil servant reporting directly to the minister. His TV manner and delivery earned him the sobriquet of The Dalek, or the speak-your-weight machine. But in the field, journalists complained of being used deliberately as channels of misinformation by the commanders on the scene or of having their copy delayed or needlessly censored. In fact, many of the 29 media men who sailed with the task force from U. K. languished on board ships without hope of any hard news for more than three weeks and were pestered by editors for colorful feature stories in the manner immortalized by Evelyn Waugh's *Scoop*. So far, only a handful of these customers have given evidence before the Parliamentary Committee.

Coopted onto the committee is the redoubtable former defense correspondent of the *Daily Express*, Chapman Pincher, described by General Hackett in his book about World War III as "regarded by some as the bane of Whitehall, but by others as its last hope." He will be a stern judge of Fleet Street's ethics and the validity of their complaints.

The "Silent Service" has borne the brunt of a good deal of criticism of this nature; no doubt some of it justified. But it is depressing to learn that the unspectacular good news away from the sound of gunfire was simply of no interest to reporters. The scale and success of the logistic backup have never been put before the public. Ships like the *Canberra* which had no previous experience of replenishment at sea were among those to which 180,000 cubic meters of fuel were safely delivered each month. Likewise, the two large Royal Navy repair parties shipped out in North Sea offshore oil support ships performed miracles by sending nearly every damaged ship back into action. And all the patching up of wounded ships had to be carried out in the angry wastes of the South Atlantic.

One senior commander told me that during interviews by the media "a glazed look came over their eyes" whenever such feats were mentioned. Worst of all, the media put about the idea that there was serious friction between the naval and military commanders on the scene. Admiral Woodward was dubbed "Windy Woodward" because, inter alia, he did not send all his ships into frontal assault, preferably on Port Stanley itself. Had he done so, those which escaped being sunk by air attack would have run into extensive minefields. As an ex-newspaper publisher, I expected something of the sort, but it is surprising that these demoralizing stories should persist long after the brilliant feat of arms had spoken for itself.

Franks's report will no doubt generate renewed interest in the Falklands campaign. There are many lessons to be learned from this action, and an ongoing review of it will likely produce changes in naval doctrine and tactics in more than one navy.

Captain John O. Coote was a Royal Navy submariner who saw war service off Norway and in the Mediterranean and later held four sea commands in 1948-54. Based in Washington, D. C., he was on liaison duty with the U. S. Navy's submarine forces in 1955-57. At age 38, he resigned to go into newspaper publishing in Fleet Street, ending as deputy chairman of Beaverbrook Newspapers. Captain Coote has remained in close touch with the Royal Navy over the years—e.g., Admiral Fieldhouse (who was in command of the British Falklands Campaign) was Captain Coote's last XO in HMS *Tiyem*. Captain Coote has reviewed books for the *Proceedings* in the past.

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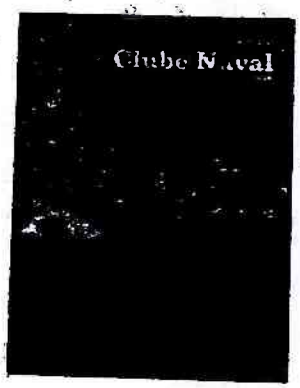

Antártida.
Foto gentilmente cedida pelo Professor Aristides Pinto Coelho.

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LEMBRAI-VOS DAS MALVINAS

José Carlos Nogueira Diniz Filho

Da luta armada entre Argentina e Inglaterra pela posse das Malvinas podem resultar algumas indicações para o Brasil.

Primeiro, ficou patente que, em política internacional, não existem *amigos tradicionais*, como nos fizeram crer durante muito tempo.

Segundo, o espaço de manobra dos países do Terceiro Mundo não pode ultrapassar os limites onde começam os interesses geopolíticos das grandes potências.

Terceiro, é muito mais real do que se pode pensar a ameaça de agressão externa e isso servirá de lição para alguns países da América Latina e em geral para os países do Terceiro Mundo, que não se preocuparam até agora em desenvolver um poderio bélico próprio, na certeza de que, na eventualidade de um ataque, estariam protegidos pelos sistemas de defesa das grandes potências (OTAN, OTASE, TIAR e quejandos).

Afinal, não foi a Argentina o único país da OEA que deu apoio incondicional à política do Presidente Reagan para a América Latina? Então, nem pensar que numa hora dessas lhe faltaria o apoio dos Estados Unidos.

O principal erro de avaliação da Argentina foi não colocar no prato da balança o peso do valor da OTAN para a luta com a União Soviética pela hegemonia mundial, em que o papel da Grã-Bretanha é bem mais importante que o da Argentina para a política de Washington na América Latina.

Em suma, iludidos com seu papel de coadjuvantes nas disputas Leste-Oeste, os países do Terceiro Mundo descuidaram um pouco da hipótese de terem de contrariar os interesses das superpotências, num eventual conflito Norte-Sul.

A partir da Guerra das Malvinas, será provavelmente deflagrada uma corrida armamentista, com o objetivo de modernizar os arsenais de cada país, em termos inclusive de armas convencionais e não mais apenas com vistas a esquemas de blocos e alianças militares.

Os países que alimentam disputas territoriais pendentes deverão mostrar-se menos afoitos no recurso a soluções de força, dando preferência aos canais diplomáticos, embora

se armem para terem maior poder de barganha nas negociações.

INGLATERRA E OTAN

Outras lições poderão ser extraídas do fato de a Marinha inglesa, ao se readaptar para desempenhar papel específico na Aliança Atlântica, ter perdido seu poderio bélico em ações convencionais como a exigida no Atlântico Sul, e não ter conseguido um desempenho à altura do papel que lhe fora reservado pela OTAN, qual seja, o de oferecer o primeiro combate a um ataque soviético à Europa Ocidental.

Pode-se desde já imaginar as dificuldades da Rainha dos Mares se tivesse de enfrentar os soviéticos, que contam hoje com mísseis dez vezes mais potentes que o *Exocet*. Os especialistas britânicos em armamentos sabem disso.

Ao se aparelhar para cumprir papel específico na OTAN, a Inglaterra trocou os pesados encouraçados, equipados com canhões de grosso calibre, por embarcações mais leves, algumas delas afundadas pela aviação argentina. Ao mesmo tempo, os antigos encouraçados, equipados com canhões de grosso calibre, fizeram falta aos ingleses na cobertura dos desembarques de *Port Darwin, Goose Green* e principalmente *Fitzroy*, onde houve pesadas baixas.

A guerra das Malvinas — como a de Israel no Líbano, a do Iraque e Irã e todas as guerras limitadas — funciona também como excelente campo de provas de novos artefatos bélicos. Sob esse ponto de vista, as Malvinas provaram, por exemplo, que o *Sea Wolf*, concebido como míssil antiaéreo e antimíssil, só se mostrou eficiente em incursões isoladas da aviação argentina, mas fracassou contra ataques aéreos maciços. Também o *Sea Dart* e o *Sea Slug*, principais defesas da Real Marinha inglesa contra aviões, apresentaram, na prática, uma *performance* decepcionante.

A vulnerabilidade dos navios de guerra, nos ataques aéreos de mísseis, certamente reacenderá o eterno debate sobre o valor das forças marítimas de superfície numa guerra eletrônica moderna, em que os foguetes são disparados a quilômetros de distância e guiados por sistemas eletrônicos e de computador. Talvez se possa argumentar que a frota inglesa no Atlântico Sul foi reunida às pressas, sem adequada proteção aérea e de radar, formada de navios adaptados à última hora e munida de armas que ainda não tinham sido provadas em combate.

Quanto ao propalado absoletismo das embarcações pesadas, como encouraçados, é assunto que merece cuidadoso exame, pois se fosse assim não se explicaria por que países como os Estados Unidos estão investindo maciçamente na modernização de belonaves que já haviam sido desativadas, entre elas os quatro encouraçados classe *Iowa*, que terão preservados os canhões de grosso calibre e receberão ultra-sofisticado equipamento eletrônico de defesa. Nem haveria lógica na decisão da Grã-Bretanha de voltar atrás na venda do *Invencible* e na desativação do *Hermes*, para modernizá-los em seus estaleiros.

CANHÕES E MANTEIGA

O que tem retardado o desenvolvimento de novos projetos militares, no Brasil, é o escrúpulo de setores das Forças Armadas em patrocinar projetos de caráter declaradamente bélico. Outro ponto é a questão dos investimentos militares como fator de agravamento da situação econômica do País, tendo em vista o dilema econômico de "canhões e manteiga", enunciado por Paul Samuelson, ou de sua mais recente versão argentina — "pucará ou caramelos" — e que, traduzido em linguagem tipicamente brasileira, poderia confrontar opções polêmicas como "quartéis ou escolas", e "fuzis ou feijão".

Diante da nova conjuntura, criada após o confronto das Malvinas, será inevitável o crescimento das aplicações no rearmamento de nossas Forças Armadas, pois se trata de um problema de soberania, e, como tal, pairando acima das dificuldades com o balanço de pagamentos e merecendo a mesma prioridade que o programa de energia nuclear.

Nessa corrida armamentista levará vantagem o país que dispuser de uma infra-estrutura industrial-militar já montada e em plena produção, pois terá acesso mais rápido à modernização dos arsenais bélicos.

Nesse ponto, o Brasil leva vantagem sobre a maioria dos países do Terceiro Mundo, porque dispõe de uma indústria bélica com produtos testados e de grande aceitação no mercado mundial. Com menos de dez anos de existência, a indústria bélica brasileira passou a ser cotada entre as seis maiores do mundo. São mais de 400 empresas estatais, privadas, nacionais e multinacionais, direta ou indiretamente produzindo material bélico, com um contingente de trabalho calculado em cerca de 120 mil trabalhadores e envolvendo negócios da ordem de US$ 5 bilhões, com vendas de US$ 1,2 bilhão.

A Indústria de Material Bélico (IMBEL) é a *holding* estatal que conduz a política econômica do setor, tanto no plano interno, para atender à demanda das Forças Armadas, quanto no plano internacional, através da *trading* Companhia de Comércio Exterior (CODECE). Graças à estrutura montada no Brasil, evita-se a evasão de divisas com os gastos em defesa, que duplicaram entre 1974 e 1980. A expansão da indústria bélica brasileira no mercado internacional é balizada pela Política Nacional de Exportação de Material de Emprego Militar (PNEMEM), implementada a partir do Conselho de Segurança Nacional e de órgãos econômico-financeiros estatais, como a CACEX.

A exportação de armamentos seria uma saída, a curto prazo, no esforço para reequilibrar a balança comercial brasileira, num momento em que os produtos tradicionais encontram fortes barreiras protecionistas no exterior.

A VEZ DA MARINHA

Recentemente o Presidente Figueiredo sancionou lei criando a ENGEPRON (Empresa Gerencial de Projetos Navais), vinculada ao Ministério da Marinha. A ENGEPRON é o terceiro suporte, que faltava, ao tripé do nascente complexo industrial-militar brasileiro, até aqui formado pela IMBEL (Exército) e pela EMBRAER (Aeronáutica).

A nova empresa estatal reunirá numa só organização os setores industriais da Força Naval, como o Arsenal de Marinha, a Fábrica de Artilharia e o Centro de Munição, todos localizados no Rio.

Outra atribuição da ENGEPRON é a tomada de recursos no exterior. Com isso, o Governo evitará que percentagens elevadas do Orçamento da União sejam destinadas ao reaparelhamento da Marinha.

Em 1981, para a construção de quatro navios balizadores, a Marinha conseguiu financiamentos ex-

ternos da ordem de Cr$ 452 milhões e até a Marinha dos Estados Unidos deu sua parcela de contribuição. Para este ano, o orçamento da Marinha é de Cr$ 96,2 bilhões, dos quais Cr$ 13 bilhões estão à espera de financiamentos externos. Em Londres, um consórcio de bancos liderado pelo Lloyd's concedeu à Marinha do Brasil empréstimo de US$ 300 milhões.

A lei que cria a ENGEPRON dá a ela as responsabilidades de colaborar no planejamento e na fabricação dos meios navais pela transferência de tecnologia, fomentar a instalação de novas indústrias do setor e prestar-lhes assistência técnica e financeira, estimular e apoiar técnica e financeiramente as atividades de pesquisa e desenvolvimento do se- contratar estudos, planos, projetos, obras e serviços visando ao fortalecimento da indústria militar naval no País, e firmar acordos para a obtenção de meios necessários à execução de suas atividades.

OS GRANDES ESTALEIROS

No setor naval, especificamente, há uma infra-estrutura constituída de uma dúzia de grandes estaleiros. Eles estão interessados em construir navios de guerra, não só participando do esforço de modernização da nossa Marinha de Guerra, como também visando ao mercado externo. No ano passado, o Brasil exportou embarcações militares no montante de US$ 2,9 milhões destacando-se lanchas usadas pelo Chile no patrulhamento do Canal de Beagle. Foram vendidas 10 dessas chas, que hoje valem US$ 1,5 milhão cada. O fornecimento de barcos armados à América Latina e à África e a garantia de abastecimento de munição viabilizam a abertura de uma carteira de encomendas no total de US$ 70 milhões anuais.

Há dois anos atrás o Brasil atingiu o segundo lugar (depois do Japão) na construção de navios, superando até tradicionais armadores como os franceses, italianos, alemães, norte-americanos e soviéticos. O II Programa de Construção Naval, do Ministério da Marinha, a ser executado até 1990, prevê a construção de um navio-escola, dez corvetas lança-mísseis, submarinos e outros navios auxiliares. O projeto dessas embarcações é nacional, assim como boa parte do seu equipamento e componentes. E a tecnologia da maioria das armas importadas hoje pode ser absorvida em curto prazo pela indústria nacional.

A Marinha também poderá desenvolver novas armas no seu Instituto de Pesquisas, como a Aeronáutica no Centro Técnico Aeroespacial e o Exército no Instituto Militar de Engenharia. Esses três órgãos de pesquisa das Forças Armadas trabalham no desenvolvimento das novas tecnologias de armamentos e na nacionalização de *know-how* estrangeiro. Uma vez desenvolvido e testado o projeto, a encomenda é colocada na indústria privada, que se incumbe da produção em série.

Dentro do esquema de modernização da Marinha brasileira, certamente merecerá atenção especial o reequipamento do porta-aviões "Minas Gerais". A EMBRAER, que está empenhada no desenvolvimento do projeto do caça a jato AMX, em associação com duas indústrias italianas, considera viável a adaptação do projeto para a fabricação de um avião que opere a partir do porta-aviões.

ESTRATÉGIA E DIPLOMACIA

Se um conflito na América Central provocar o fechamento do Canal do Panamá, o tráfego entre Atlântico e Pacífico dependerá do Estreito de Magalhães, da Passagem de Drake e do Canal de Beagle. Essa é, a grosso modo, a importância estratégica das Malvinas.

Tudo leva a crer que os ingleses irão agora propor a presença de tropas norte-americanas nas ilhas reconquistadas. Londres certamente não terá cacife para manter ali um sistema de defesa contra possíveis ataques futuros. Não podendo *bancar* sozinha o jogo do poder que agora irá se desenrolar, seu aliado natural será os Estados Unidos. Logo, tudo leva a crer que as Malvinas tenderão a transformar-se em base de apoio a um dispositivo de defesa do Atlântico Sul.

O Brasil já manifestou, várias vezes, seu ponto de vista contrário à extensão do conflito entre as grandes potências ao Atlântico Sul. A presença soviética e a aproximação da Argentina com Cuba, por exemplo, podem ser o início de uma conjuntura frontalmente contrária à tese brasileira.

E por ser contra a presença soviética no Atlântico Sul, o Brasil, até por uma questão de coerência, deverá ser também contra a presença norte-americana. No entanto, há precedente de territórios de jurisdição britânica arrendados para a instalação de bases militares dos Estados Unidos, como é o caso das ilhas de Ascensão, no Atlântico Sul, e Diego Garcia, no Índico.

É provável, pois, que se inicie, agora, para o Brasil, um duro período de negociações em que os pontos de vista do Itamaraty terão muita dificuldade para se impor. Os Estados Unidos sabem disso, tanto que se tornaram mais freqüentes as trocas de mensagens entre os Presidentes Ronald Reagan e João Figueiredo.

As posições conflitantes do Brasil e dos Estados Unidos poderão encontrar novas áreas de atrito na crescente autonomia com que o Brasil vem marcando sua presença no Atlântico: antes de se delinear a hipótese de uma base anglo-norte-americana nas Malvinas, o Brasil aprovara planos de instalar a base militar da Ilha de Trindade, que, pela sua configuração e posição geográfica, é um porta-aviões natural para as operações aeronavais brasileiras.

E antes mesmo do início das hostilidades nas Malvinas, a Marinha decidira, afinal, realizar a expedição à Antártida, marcando sua presença num continente de grande importância estratégica e econômica, após longo período de omissão e vacilações.

Em estratégia militar, às vezes, um erro de avaliação decide uma vitória ou uma derrota. O maior erro dos argentinos foi imaginar que os ingleses não viriam de tão longe para lutar por dois pedaços de pedra perdidos próximo ao Pólo Sul.

Parodiando o *"Remember Pearl Harbor!"* da Segunda Guerra Mundial, que o episódio das Malvinas sirva de advertência para os que acham desnecessária a manutenção de um Poder Naval brasileiro. A vitória dessa tese conseguiria transformar a gloriosa Marinha de Guerra brasileira apenas numa repartição eficiente no combate ao contrabando e outros males que afetam nossa segurança interna...

Lembrai-vos das Malvinas!

José Carlos Nogueira Diniz Filho, nome ligado à cultura e às artes, é advogado, empresário e estudioso da problemática internacional, com vários cursos no exterior, estando cursando, atualmente, a Escola Superior de Guerra.

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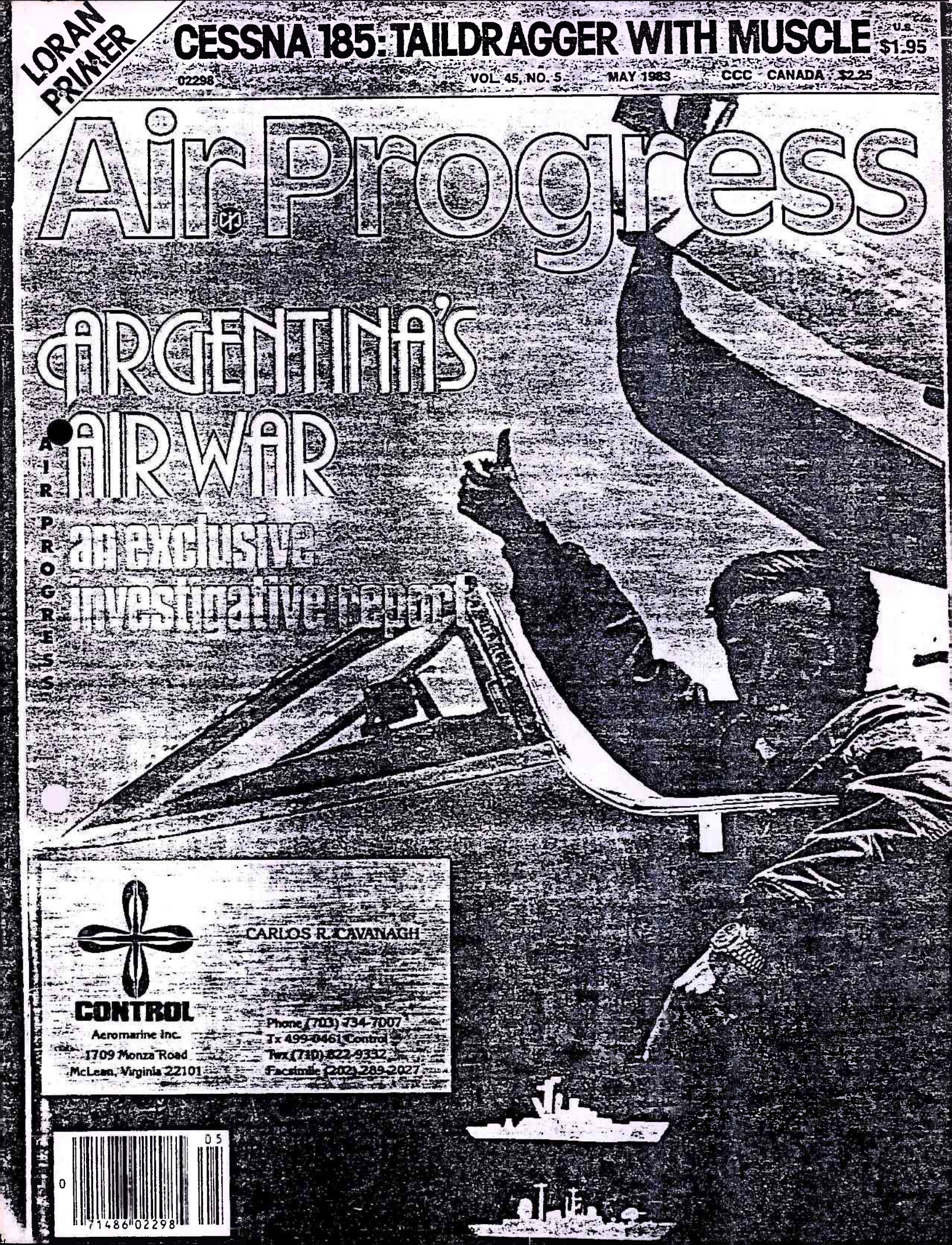
AIR PROGRESS an EXCLUSIVE investigative report



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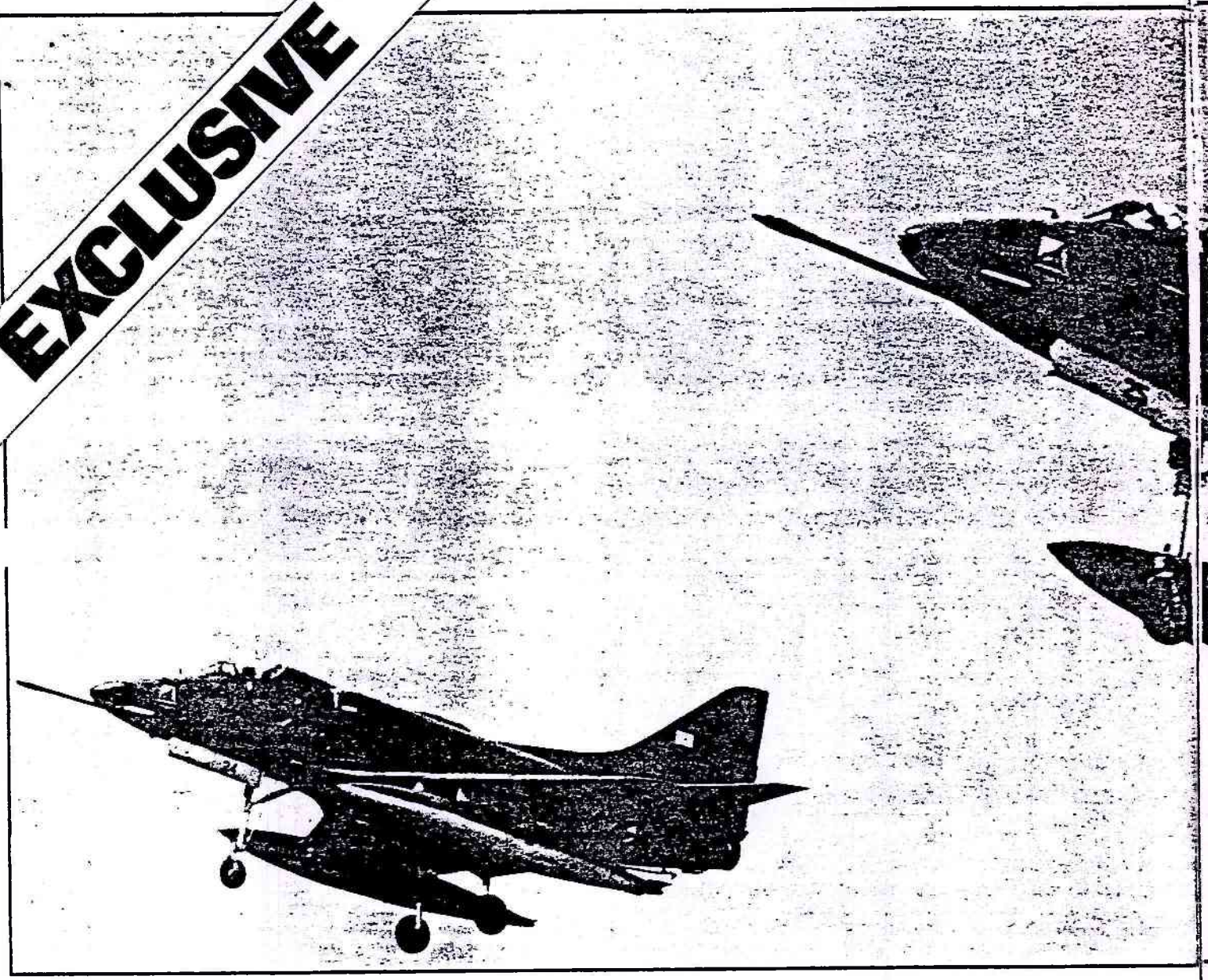


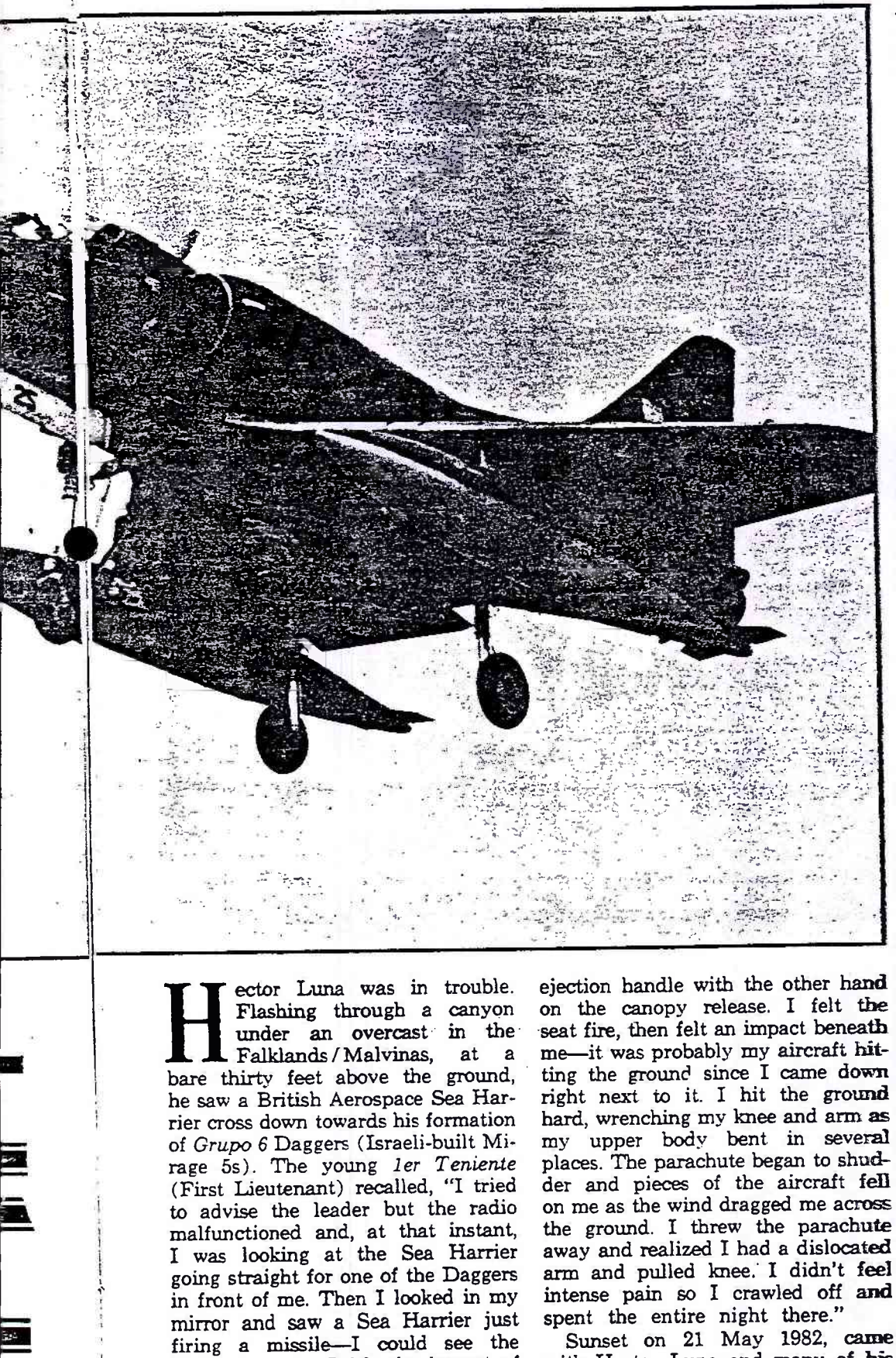
The other side-

ARGENTINE AIR WAR

AN EXCLUSIVE AIR PROGRESS INVESTIGATIVE REPORT OF ARGENTINA'S AIR WAR IN THE RECENT FALKLANDS/ MALVINAS FIGHTING

By Jeff Ethell and Michael O'Leary

Photography by Michael O'Leary



Scramble! Douglas A-4B Skyhawks roar off the runway at Villa Reynolds for a training mission. These Skyhawks had born the brunt of much of the fighting. As we go to press, Argentina is trying to purchase a number of Skyhawks from Israel (a major supplier of military equipment to Argentina). However, the US government has been able to block the sale but the Israelis are known to be attempting to find a third country that the Skyhawks could be "sold" to before being transferred to Argentina.

On the morning of Friday, 2 April 1982, Argentinian armed forces returned to the Isle Malvinas to reestablish proper Argentinian ownership after 149 years of occupation by a foreign colonial power . . . or they carried out landings on the Falkland Islands to seize the territory and enforce an alien rule upon the people of British extraction living there peacefully. Just how one describes that event says more about the sympathies of the teller than the event itself.

Whether the conflict should have happened, or whether with better diplomacy it might have been avoided will be debated for years to come. The fact of the matter is that two former allies went to war with each other with little preparation and great determination. Until now only the British side of the conflict has emerged. Last year *Air Progress* had the opportunity to travel to Argentina at the behest of both the *Fuerza Aerea Argentina* and the *Armada Argentina* to visit and fly with the units which bore the brunt of the war. There are few stories of courage and bravery to rival what these pilots went through and accomplished by sheer seat of the pants flying.

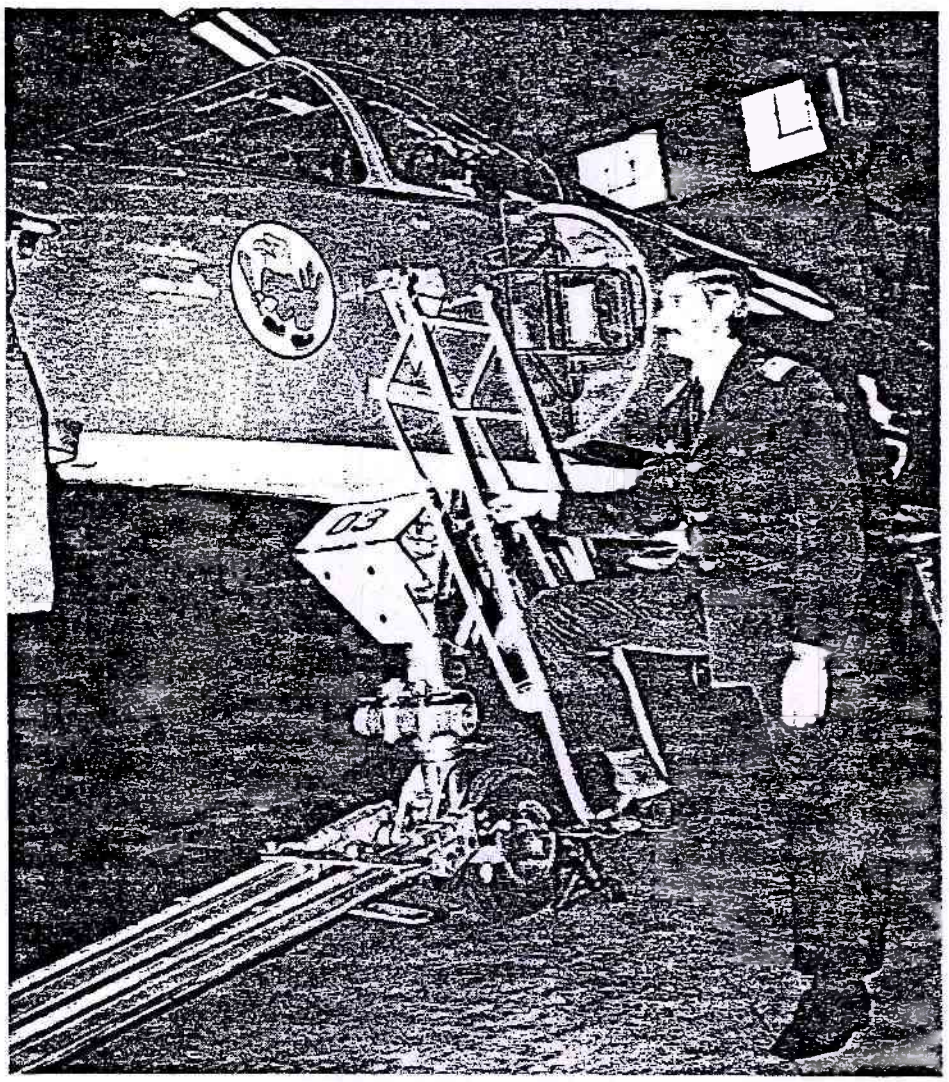
Through Argentine Air Attache *Brigadier* (Brig Gen) Ricardo Pena and his assistant *Comodoro* (Col) Corradetti, and Assistant Naval Attache *Capitan de fragata* (Cdr) Eduardo Alimonda, the doors were opened wide for an extraordinary look at how Argentina fought a modern air war.

Arriving in Buenos Aires we were met by *Vicecomodoro* (Lt Col) Ricardo Di Liscia and Saul Bracera Haedo, representatives of the Air Force High Command. Apprehension was quickly dissipated by these very personable men who made sure Americans were welcome. Soon we were down to first names and before two weeks were over, many wonderful evenings had been spent with the families of these Air Force officials. Contact was also made with *Capitan de fragata* Crivellini of the Navy

Hector Luna was in trouble. Flashing through a canyon under an overcast in the Falklands/Malvinas, at a bare thirty feet above the ground, he saw a British Aerospace Sea Harrier cross down towards his formation of *Grupo 6* Daggers (Israeli-built Mirage 5s). The young *1er Teniente* (First Lieutenant) recalled, "I tried to advise the leader but the radio malfunctioned and, at that instant, I was looking at the Sea Harrier going straight for one of the Daggers in front of me. Then I looked in my mirror and saw a Sea Harrier just firing a missile—I could see the flash of smoke. I felt the impact of the missile against my aircraft, which went out of control, then managed to regain control and instinctively pulled back on the stick to climb so that I could eject at around 450 to 500 knots.

"Instead of climbing, the Dagger rolled as I tried to keep the nose on the horizon—I managed to find the ejection handle with the other hand on the canopy release. I felt the seat fire, then felt an impact beneath me—it was probably my aircraft hitting the ground since I came down right next to it. I hit the ground hard, wrenching my knee and arm as my upper body bent in several places. The parachute began to shudder and pieces of the aircraft fell on me as the wind dragged me across the ground. I threw the parachute away and realized I had a dislocated arm and pulled knee. I didn't feel intense pain so I crawled off and spent the entire night there."

Sunset on 21 May 1982, came with Hector Luna and many of his fellow *Fuerza Aerea Argentina* (Argentine Air Force) and *Armada Argentina* (Argentine Navy) pilots having come through the bloodiest day of the Falklands/Malvinas War —others would never come back after facing the British ships in San Carlos Bay and their Sea Harrier combat air patrols.



CAPITAN DE FRAGATA Jorge Colombo stands before the Super Entendard that sank both the HMS SHEFFIELD and ATLANTIC CONVEYOR with Exocet missiles—one of the most effective weapons employed by Argentina during the fighting. Argentina had only a few missiles at their disposal since the French had joined in the international embargo against Argenia.

and the doors were open there as well. It did not take long to see that the major obstacles to overcome were going to be extensive hospitality and too much to eat—Argentine beef is even better than its reputation.

The first stop after getting settled into the excellent *Circulo de Oficiales* (Air Force Hotel) was *Aeroporque*, the small airport in the middle of Buenos Aires which serves as an Air Force transport hub. The Argentine Air Force Museum is there as well, dominated by an Avro Lincoln, Ju 52 and numerous other vintage aircraft. We were assigned an IA 50 *Guarani* utrboprop transport, built in-country by the *Fabrica Militar de Aviones*. Then we were off to our first base.

Descending into the *V Brigada Aerea* base of Villa Reynolds, we were struck by the vast Argentine plain and how this base seems to be in the middle of nowhere. This should not have been surprising since almost two-thirds of the country lives in Buenos Aires. As we rolled out on the runway, we could see the olive and brown camouflaged Douglas A-4B Skyhawks of *IV* and *V Escuadron de Caza-Bombardeo* (4th and 5th Fighter-Bomber Squadrons) which had born the brunt of much of the fighting.

Comodoro Juan Lascomb and *Vicecomodoro* Ruben Zini welcomed us to the base and before long we were hearing first hand what it was like to attack ships at low level without sophisticated equipment. These two squadrons flew seven major missions during the war, losing ten aircraft and nine pilots. *Teniente* (2nd Lt) Jose Carlos, *Alferez* (Flt Officer) Marcelo Moroni, *Alferez* Jorge Neuvo and *Vicecomodoro* Ernesto Dubut joined Lascomb and Zini to describe what it was like.

After their first few missions, Air Force pilots quickly realized that they would have to fly low and fast if they were to survive the intense British antiaircraft guns and missiles, not to mention the Sea Harriers and their new generation AIM-9L Sidewinder missiles. If they climbed above fifty feet, they were likely to be shot down—if they stayed below fifty feet, it meant dropping their bombs too close to the ships for them to go off. It became normal for the attack jets to press in at speeds of 500 knots so low that salt would collect on the windshields and block the view through the gunsight. Without a gunsight, pilots drew two grease pencil lines (one for ship deck level, the other for horizontal) and bracketed the ships between the two lines, dropping bombs as the ship went under the nose. That no aircraft actually hit the ships is a testimony to the skill of the pilots, although A-4B pilot *Ten.* Philippini hit the mast of the *Antelope* on 21 May, losing the fin off one droptank.

Sea Harriers were normally waiting for incoming attacks at three points which coincided with the normal headings from the major Argentine bases of San Julian, Rio Gallegos and Rio Grande. Since none of the Skyhawks were configured for air-to-air combat, the only approved Sea Harrier defense tactic was to go full throttle away from the attack.

Jorge Neuvo described his attack on the *Coventry* on 25 May, "As we began our run (one minute out at top speed) they fired a missile. I don't know what kind of missile it was; perhaps a Sea Dart because the frigate was of the 42 series, which turned out to be the *Coventry*. The missile passed over us at about 900 to 1,200 feet. Once I framed the ship in my sight, I saw nothing else for about thirty seconds but I felt something like the impact of cannon fire before releasing my bombs. As we were coming toward the frigate, we noticed it began to quickly change course ninety degrees. By the time I released my bombs I was forty degrees off from the ship—we passed over and noticed three bomb hits on it."

As a rule, Air Force pilots had had no training in attacking ships since their mission was air-to-ground. For two weeks in April 1982 the Navy A-4 pilots ran their Air Force counterparts through the fundamentals of hitting ships and then Argentina went to war. Considering all that was against them, they did a creditable job. In general the pilots dropped their bombs so close to the ships that they could not fly around but had to hop over them. Most of the losses to missiles were during the run into the target—the Argen-

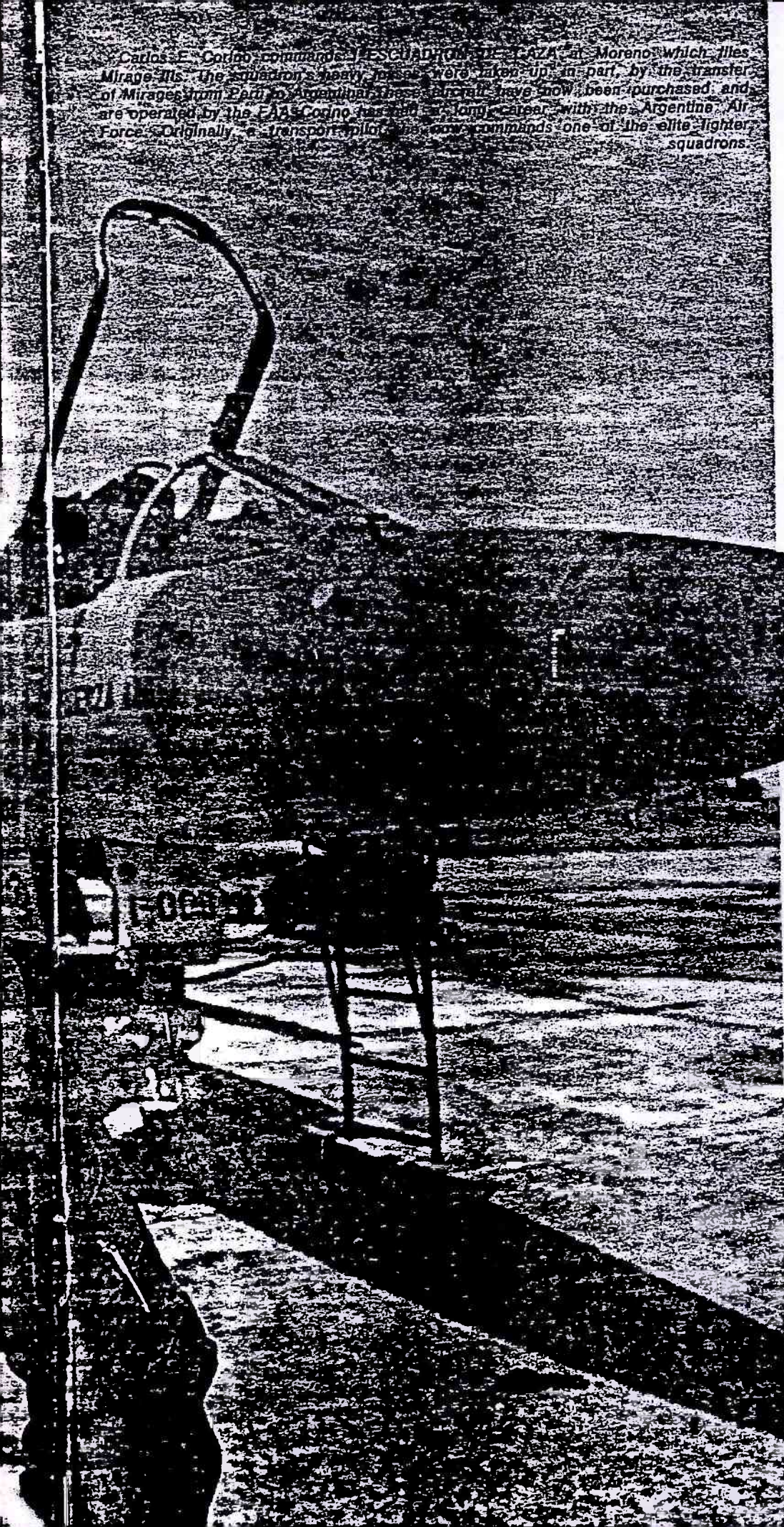
tines found that the ship's defenses were not set up for the other side.

No one was lost due to running out of fuel since both of Argentina's Lockheed KC-130 tankers were at constant orbit points northwest and southwest of the Falklands/Malvinas 100 miles from the Argentine coast. If anyone needed fuel, they simply flew to the area and picked up the gas. Twice A-4s so badly damaged they were streaming fuel from holes in the wings hooked up to a tanker which then flew them back to base —on short final the Skyhawks unplugged and landed. The only aircraft that could not refuel were the Mirage IIIs, Daggers, Canberras and Lear Jets but these aircraft watched their fuel and had no problem in running out.

Battle damage was repaired quickly by maintenance crews and there was a great deal of it from small arms and antiaircraft fire. If an aircraft was hit by a missile, it was normally lost, whether from Sidewinders or surface-to-air missiles. Help from Argentine radars on the islands was excellent and lasted throughout the war, helping the attack aircraft to avoid Sea Harriers.

Weather was another enemy to battle for both sides. It would not be unusual for visibility to disappear and the ceiling to go right down on the water. A-4B pilot *1er Ten.* Hector Sanchez attacked the ships at Bluff Cove on 8 June through some very poor weather—"As we flew south, me as #4 bringing up the rear, we could see curtains of rain—the weather was very bad. It would rain in sections all the way to the surface. At our altitude, at the entrance to Darwin, we saw a ship unloading troops. As we flew south I could feel hits on my aircraft from behind but could not see who was firing or from where. We flew even lower, now skimming the surface itself. As we bored in to attack the ship, I suddenly had to dodge an aircraft coming towards me, climbing to avoid a collision. At that moment, on both sides, were two Sea Harriers which launched two Sidewinders, one from each Harrier. The Skyhawk behind me exploded and #2 was hit square in the tail with an explosion which ripped the fighter part—he ejected but the parachute was burning. The leader was escaping, then I saw the Sea Harrier leader waiting for me. I cleaned the aircraft of bombs and external fuel tanks and escaped."

Next on the itinerary was *IV Brigada Aerea* at Mendoza where *I Escuadron de Caza-Bombardeo* flies the A-4C Skyhawk painted in green and



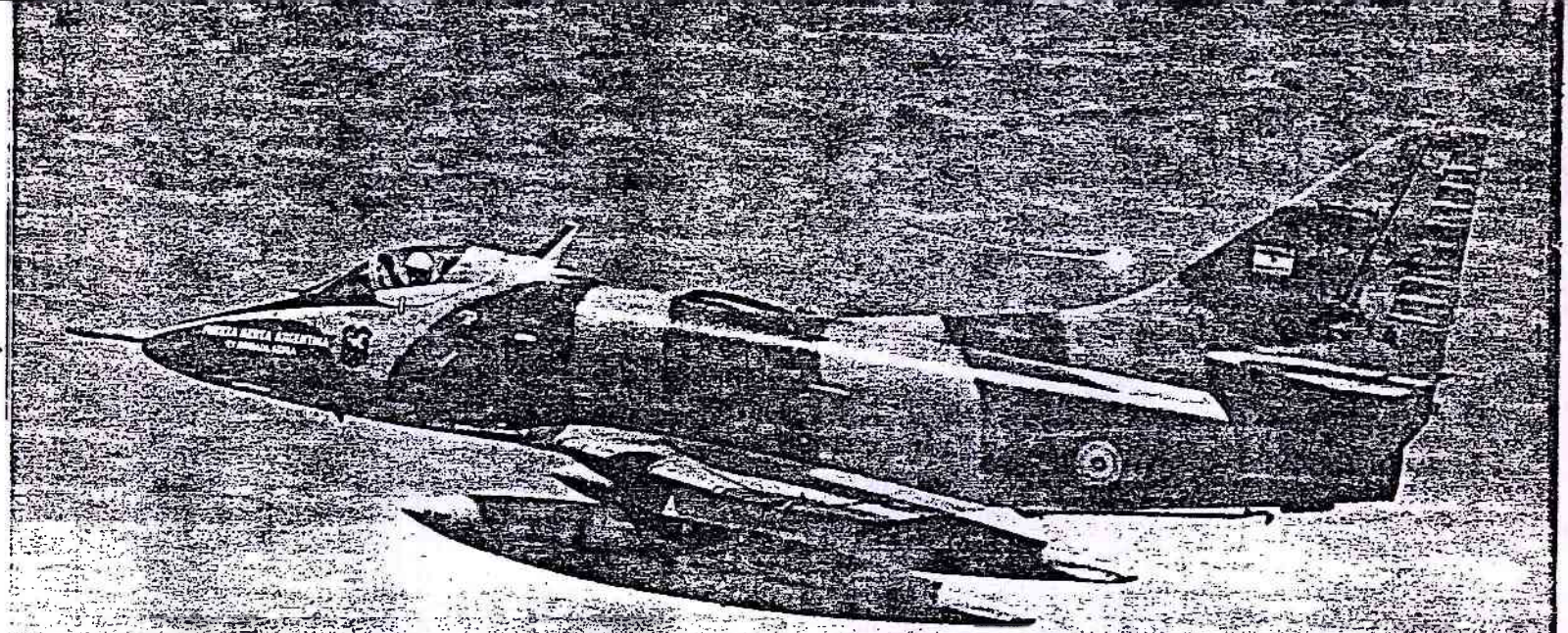
Carlos E. Cogno commands 1 ESCUADRON DE CAZA at Moreno which flies Mirage IIIs. The squadron's heavy losses were taken up, in part, by the transfer of Mirages from Peru to Argentina. These aircraft have now been purchased and are operated by the FAA. Cogno has had a long career with the Argentine Air Force. Originally a transport pilot, he now commands one of the elite fighter squadrons.

tan camouflage, typical of the desert area surrounding the base. We were warmly welcomed by the squadron commander and shown around the field, which also had a squadron of beautiful North American F-86 Sabres in mint condition and used for advanced training. The A-4C squadron flew around 120 sorties, losing nine aircraft and eight pilots. Attack priorities were in the following order: 1) aircraft carriers, 2) logistical support ships, 3) ships close to land, 4) enemy aircraft, 5) warships. It seemed that in spite of all the planning that could be done, warships were encountered first and therefore attacked, in spite of the heavy antiaircraft defenses.

Though formations of as many as eight aircraft would approach the islands on a mission, they almost always broke down into flights of three or four and attacked in waves. Pilots were briefed to drop their bombs from thirty feet or lower but often they had to climb to get a good acquisition.

Since aircraft were limited, three pilots were assigned to one Skyhawk and this helped to prevent fatigue. Pilots were simply rotated through based on who had last flown. Experience level varied quite a bit from squadron commanders to young *Alferez* (Flt Officer) who had only just finished tactical training a few weeks before the war.

1er Ten. Ernesto Ureta flew one of four A-4Cs which were assigned to attack the *HMS Invincible* on 30 May 1982 with the Navy's Super Etendards. Each Skyhawk carried two 500 lb bombs, flying in close formation with two Super Etendards, only one of which carried a French Exocet missile. After refueling from the KC-130, the six aircraft went into the target area guided by the inertial navigation system in the Super Etendards. . . . "we flew into the target area just skimming the surface of the sea. The Exocet was launched and the four of us went in together—in thirty seconds we were in the target area. The waves and salt spray blocked much of the view through the windshield so we had to make our own judgement as



A Douglas A-4C Skyhawk on a training mission from Mendoza. Ernesto Ureta claimed hits against the carrier INVINCIBLE in a similar aircraft from I ESCUADRON DE CAZA-BOMBARDEO.

to the proper release point. Before we could get the ship, Sea Darts shot down *Capitans* Jose Vazquez and Omar Castillo. *Alferez* Gerardo Isaac and I pressed in to the target. The attack was made about thirty degrees off the ship's stern and the bombs were released according to the size of the carrier. After flying directly over and away from the carrier, I made a turn thirty feet above the water and then confirmed the impact of my bomb. A great cloud of smoke had formed and this confirmed that the bomb had hit the carrier. I then flew on for about fifteen miles before turning back for the continent in order to avoid any missiles that might have been fired."

After interviewing Ureta we went to the base officer's mess for lunch and found the entire *Brigada* glued to the television set in the lounge. The BBC documentary on the Falklands was being shown to these men for the first time since the war and the atmosphere was electric. Several times one could discern that A-4Cs were atacking, flown by the very men in the room. These men found themselves drawn into the scene as they watched fellow A-4C pilot Ricardo Lucero being shot down into the water on 25 May, then being picked up by the British and brought on board *HMS Fearless* for treatment—Lucero was only a few seats away from us. Then they watched the terrible destruction they wrought not only on ships but on men during the 8 June attack. British rescue helicopters pressed into the black smoke, going completely blind to get their men out of the sea and pushed the life rafts away from the burning ships with the wind of their rotors . . . great cheers went up in this room full of fellow pilots as the helicopter crews disregarded safety to perform their task. There were no enemies at that moment. As bleeding and limbless men were brought off the rescue helicopters, the war came completely home and there were not a few sickend men in the room. War is terrible, exacting a nauseating toll on fellow human beings. Without exception we heard nothing but respect for the British crews come from their Argentine counterparts. The hush in that room of military aviators, no different from any we have met in America or Britain, is something we will never forget.

Our next stop was Parana, the base of *II Brigada Aerea* and the home of *I Escuadron de Bombardeo* flying Canberras and *I Escuadron Aerofotografico* flying Lear Jets.

Capt. Alberto Baigorri was on the first Canberra mission on 1 May. Six Canberras took off from Trelew in two flights of three with Baigorri leading the second flight. "About 150 miles from the target the #3 in the flight called a missile headed my way—I looked toward the right and saw the missile hit the #2 aircraft, flown by pilot *Ten.* Eduardo Delbanez and navigator *1er Ten.* Mario Gonzales. The bomber continued to fly off my right wing with an engine in flames as it started down—I saw them both eject before it hit the water. Above I saw the Sea Harrier looking to see whose turn it was next! I broke right and called my #3 to break left . . . I saw the Sea Harrier still above us but apparently it could not see us on its radar screen so we got out of there. After making sure the Sea Harrier was not around, we turned around and tried to locate the pilot and navigator but we could not find them—they were lost."

Since the Canberras proved to be so vulnerable during daylight, they switched to night missions against those ships farthest away from the islands, dropping their 1,000 lb bombs from 500 feet.

Capitan Roberto Pastran flew the unit's last mission on 13 June—"After I dropped my bombs on *Mt. Kent* a missile hit me underneath, possibly a Sea Dart. We fell from 40,000 feet on fire—when the aircraft entered a spin, I kept calling for my navigator, *Capitan* Fernando Casado, to eject, trying to wait just a little longer for him, but after four turns I knew for some reason he could not get out. I ejected, probably around 6,000 feet, and descended into the water." Pastran spent all night in his raft, then walked across the island until 7:30 p.m. the next night when he was picked up by a British helicopter—he was a prisoner for a month and was well treated by his captors. All those who were captured by the British said they were well cared for.

In general the Canberra pilots used the tactics taught them by the British when they bought the aircraft to replace the Avro Lincoln. The only countermeasures equipment carried by the bombers was chaff and flares until some very rudimentary ECM gear was installed halfway through the war.

The four Lear 35As of *I Escuadron Aerofotografico* flew 129 sorties in seventy-six days, flying 342.2 hrs

total and they proved to be the most vital aircraft the Argentinians had, mapping the islands and the fleet, using their radar and INS to pinpoint British ships, and leading the Daggers of *Grupo 6* in to their targets fourteen times. Most of the targeting was done through the information brought back or radioed back by these military Lear Jets.

On several occasions, both night and day missions, the British launched missiles at the Lears—twice they saw them but they were not able to hit the aircraft. On 7 June this cost them their one loss of the war. *Vicecomodoro* Rodolfo De la Colina, commander of the squadron, *Mayor* (Maj) Juan Falconier, *Capitan* Marcelo Lotufo, NCOs Francisco Luna and Guido Marizza were aboard one of the four Lears, all in line abreast formation over the Falklands/Malvinas. *Capitan* Carlos Pane recalled, "This was 9:00 a.m.—we were on a photographic mission with all four squadron aircraft. Close to the Falklands/Malvinas we saw two rockets but a third we didn't see hit De la Colina's Lear—it was an instantaneous explosion at 40,000 feet. When the missile was first sighted it looked like a big ball of fire, then we could see the missile in flight. It hit the tail section of the Lear and knocked it entirely off. The aircraft then burst into flames and fell nose down. The moment the missile impacted with the Lear, De la Colina said very calmly, 'They hit me,' then he lost total control of the aircraft. He remained calm as the aircraft entered a spin, saying a few last words about the mission and directing the Daggers.

The Lears, with Omega and INS aboard, normally guided the Daggers, which had no sophisticated navigation gear, to within seventy miles of the target. Target distance and bearing were given before turning away, often with alternate target data and wind direction. Capt. Narciso Juri recalled guiding six Daggers in toward *HMS Plymouth* on 8 June—one Dagger was shot down.

After our trip to Reconquista to fly the Pucara with *Grupo III de Ataque* (see article this issue), we went to Moreno and *VIII Brigada Aerea's I Escuadron de Caza* which flies Mirage IIIs. *Comodoro* Carlos E. Corino gave us a very cordial reception and then called his pilots in to talk about the war.

On 1 May, *Grupo 8 de Caza* was launched several times as cover for the attack aircraft. Four times Falklands/Malvinas radar called enemy aircraft on the nose many miles out

"TURN! TURN!"

Walking into the officers' mess at Mendoza was like entering one of the graceful buildings of Spanish style that I remember seeing in the old Zorro movies that I used to watch as a child. Tall ceilings, arched doorways framing graceful eucalyptus trees . . . it was a quiet and peaceful moment compared to the heat and activity of the flight line. The room was quiet . . . too quiet considering the number of young pilots jammed into the room.

Their faces were all turned towards a large television that sat in one corner and what was playing on the screen was a unique experience for the Argentine pilots. Someone in the Argentine embassy in Germany had monitored a British documentary program on the Falklands/Malvinas, made a video recording of the two hour program and sent it to a friend at Mendoza.

We must remember that Argentina does not enjoy the freedom of the press that we are used to in the United States. The British program was the first real footage that these pilots had seen of the fighting in which they played such an active role. The political problems that beset Argentina and how the ruling junta hoped to capitalize on the Falklands/Malvinas problem to help pull the government out of a nearly impossible situation were carefully explained. Footage of the junta members was not greeted kindly by the pilots, both junior and senior aviators booed and shook their fists at the departed government officials.

The program progressed in a logical and even manner for which the British are justly famous. One pilot commented, "Whenever we wanted to find out what happened during the day's fighting we would try to listen to a British radio broadcast, they were usually right and usually very fair." With scenes of the British fleet being readied for sailing, another officer—viewing the scope of tremendous military power—commented "How could we hope to defeat all that firepower?"

The military bands of the British at dockside even brought a smile from one lieutenant "You can't say that the British don't have class" he remarked and it was said without irony. He did not appear to mind that the military band was playing "Don't Cry For Me Argentina."

I could see that there was a good deal of tension in the room for the pilots knew that the program was building up to actual combat and this squadron had suffered heavily even though they had caused considerable damage to the British.

The combat scenes finally arrived and many of them were familiar to American television viewers but they were all new to the Argentine pilots. They were horrified as aircraft after aircraft was blown out of the air by the immense British firepower. Before their eyes, Argentine Daggers, Mirages and Skyhawks disintegrated into balls of flame as they were hit by missiles and gunfire. The pilots were also able to see just how heroic their attacks were, they pressed their Skyhawks literally into the masts of the British ships before dropping their primitive "iron" bombs.

One Skyhawk was blasted from the air by a British gun crew aboard one of the smaller ships. The canopy fell on the deck and an officer presented a piece of plexiglass to the two gunners who were seventeen years old. The pilot ejected and came down in the sea near the ship who sent a crew out to pick him up. The exhausted and injured pilot was dumped in a sodden heap on the deck while a British Royal Marine stood over him with an automatic weapon. The pilot belonged to the Mendoza squadron and this scene enraged the pilots and there was much anger and hostility directed toward the British.

In fairness to the British it must be admitted that they complimented the skill and aggressive quality of the average Argentine pilot. However, most of the pilots did not understand English so the words were lost upon them but what they did understand were the visual images on the screen before them. The British did not hesitate at showing battle casualties and this footage was pretty terrible. British soldiers and sailors were shown badly burned, with gaping wounds and with limbs blown off. The officers were simply horrified to see the actual human damage that their bombs and guns had done. Several officers openly wept. Said one, "We never wanted to fight the British."

More footage of Argentine aircraft being blown out of the air left the pilots limp, exhausted with relived emotions. Two Skyhawks pressed home an attack as a frigate quickly set its missile targeting system on them. The two aircraft were perfectly sighted for a missile launch. "Turn! Turn!" yelled one of the pilots. Fortunately, the two Skyhawks dropped behind a convenient ridge just as the frigate fired.

When the program was nearly over, the only remaining reaction from the officers came when the commanding general of the Argentine forces on Falklands/Malvinas was shown surrendering. They shouted and cursed at him, there is no love lost between the air force, which fought to the end, and the army, who surrendered ignobly.

The pilots got up and left—the planned lunch sat untasted. For those that had participated in the fighting, the program was a nightmare in living color and instant replays. Those few minutes over San Carlos Water would be forever burned into their memories. MO'L

PARIS MISSION

I slipped into the flying suit in the pilot's ready room at Mendoza Air Base feeling a curious sense of time and place. Mendoza is over sixteen 747 hours from Los Angeles but in many ways the air base and the town are very similar to a Los Angeles of the pre-war era, an era when advertising brochures still described the area as a "paradise." Mendoza is a quiet and, to use an L.A. expression, laid-back town with pleasant shops and sidewalk cafes that show little evidence of having a busy international airport on the outskirts.

The airfield itself is very Spanish in design and goes back quite a few years. The hangars and buildings are spacious and airy—very well suited to the warm temperatures that can beset the city nestled at the base of the towering Andes. We had been visiting with the Skyhawk unit *(1 Escuadron de Caza Bombardeo)* based at the field, interviewing pilots about their recent exploits in the Falklands/Malvinas war. Mendoza is also home to a helicopter unit, an F-86 fighter/bomber training unit and two squadrons of Paris jets.

After some discussion with the Skyhawk pilots I brought up the subject of air-to-air photographs which the pilots thought a good idea. As mentioned elsewhere in this issue, the Argentine pilots have a refreshing lack of red tape and a real "let's get it done" attitude that had me quickly suiting up for the photo mission. A combat veteran Skyhawk was readied for flight as I was introduced to the young Paris pilot and we were able to converse in limited terms with broken English and Spanish. Carrying a heavy parachute and a load of cameras out onto the flightline, I was confronted by another young pilot with the greeting: "Hey, can I help you?" At first it did not register on me that this was being said in perfect Americanese and, after I got over my initial surprise, I asked the young man what on earth an American was doing in the uniform of an Argentine pilot. The answer was actually quite simple. His parents were Argentine living in New Jersey and he wanted to fly. Even though he was born in the U.S.A. he still, according to Argentine law, held a valid citizenship in Argentina so, after passing the required tests, he was accepted into air force training. His training was not complete to be able to fly combat during the Falklands/Malvinas war but by now he is probably well on his way to being assigned to a combat unit—an example of the strong feelings between Americans of Argentine heritage and their homeland.

I had seen a number of civilian examples of the Paris jet in the States where it was one of the first semi-practical examples of a civilian jet. I qualify the statement with "semi" because the Paris is noisy, short on range, somewhat underpowered and definitely unpractical for the mid-1960s boarding of a female in a mini-skirt. However, it did fill in a gap until the arrival of the Lear Jet and other more "sensible" business jets. Surviving examples are treated with the respect often accorded a collector's item and, even though it is quite rare to see one today, Paris jets are usually superbly maintained. The Paris jets in Argentine service are definitely not pampered—they are hard-working trainers, well maintained according to military standards but with virtually none of the deluxe accouterments that filled the civil bird.

I dumped the parachute on the seat, arranged cameras in the few available spaces and clambered over the side and into the seat. Adjusting the straps, one is quick to note that the Paris does not have ejection seats. *Vicecomodoro* Ricardo DiLiscia had related the tragic story of his daughter who was to carry a Paris pilot that was killed two weeks before the wedding when he was unable to get out of his Paris before it crashed. I would certainly not want the experience of trying to get out of the Paris in an emergency.

It is a bit surprising to realize that the basic design of the Paris is over thirty-years-old, the prototype flying on 29 July 1954. The aircraft was created basically as a four-seat high-speed communications and liaison craft for the French military. Over the years it evolved into several basic variants, usually reflecting increases in engine thrust. The MS-760A Paris I is the aircraft chosen by Argentina. Some were assembled in Argentina by FMA and others were built from scratch. The aircraft has a limited weapons carriage that includes two 7.5mm machine guns that can be installed in the nose section while two 110-pound bombs or four 3.5-inch rockets can be carried under the wings. However, all the Argentine versions that I saw were unarmed but armed variants certainly could be quickly created.

Starting the Paris was relatively easy, the shriek of the intakes for two Turbomeca Marbore IIC turbojets (rated at only 880 pounds thrust each) made one glad for the protection afforded by the helmet. Mendoza, during December, is decidely on the warm side so taxiing is accomplished with the large canopy cracked open. Mendoza is also high and this fact was immediately made evident when the throttles were advanced and the little Paris began to roll with an authority that can also be described as limited. Down the runway we went, gathering speed bit by bit as I watched several of the landmarks disappear behind us. The pilot seemed to be fairly unconcerned so I relaxed my grip on the seat frame just a bit. Finally the Paris just sort of rose in the air and continued straight ahead, gaining altitude very slowly and giving me an excellent chance to observe the terrain at a close level. The Paris started to get into its own as we rose higher and speed began to increase. The little jet was not exactly quiet on the inside and communication was a bit difficult.

Twisting around in my seat I could see the Douglas Skyhawk from the *1 Escuadron de Caza Bombardeo* lifting off the runway. In a matter of moments the Skyhawk was flying a tight formation for the photo run with the imposing Andes as a backdrop. The Skyhawk pilot broke formation to make some fighter style passes on the Paris. The *1 Escuadron de Caza Bombardeo* suffered heavily in the fighting with the British and many empty spaces on the flightline at Mendoza attested to the fact that a lot of the Skyhawks did not make it back. However, the pilots did press home devastating attacks on the British fleet. Flying into the face of modern fighters and heavy defensive missile systems, the Skyhawks scored hit after hit—badly damaging the British fleet and if all their "iron" bombs had detonated on impact there is a good possibility that the war would have been reversed.

After our photo run had been completed we went for a little "tour" of the Andes—one of the most treacherous bits of real estate on the face of the earth. Steep mountains thrust their snowy peaks at us as we motored through the area, checking out various spots of scenic grandeur. The turbulence over these mountains is legendary and many aircraft wrecks imbedded in the sides of the peaks attest to the fact that the Andes claim more than their share of aviators. In fact, the turbulence got so bad that the controls were literally pulled from my hands during my brief spell at piloting the Paris. Our G meter, on landing, registered an impressive plus 6, minus 3. Figures that make even the most stout-hearted aviation editor a bit queasy.

Landing back at Mendoza, we filled in the required forms, refueled the little Paris for the next student flight and went back to the squadron headquarters for a Coke and a few minutes of relaxation before heading off for an interview with the combat pilots. The Paris was soon back into the air on a training mission and, in fact, the entire airbase was a scene of considerable training as new pilots were given intensive instruction. This new class of young men will help fill the many slots left by the death of the Argentine pilots who pressed their attacks home against the British with the realization that, for many of them, there would not be a tomorrow. **MO'L**

and each time the formations passed each other—the Mirages were at 25,000 feet trying to draw the Sea Harriers up where the Mirage was at its best in air combat and the Harriers were trying to draw the Mirages down into their best altitudes below 10,000 feet. The Mirages were operating with large 1,700 liter external tanks and Matra missiles but they were never in any great danger of running out of fuel.

Capitan Gustavo Cuerva and his wingman, *1er Ten.* Carlos Perona received information from Falklands/Malvinas radar that there were Sea Harriers at 12 o'clock. Cuerva spotted two Sea Harriers and fired two missiles which missed. The Harriers then curved around and fired their Sidewinders — one exploded near Cuerva, causing severe damage, so he diverted to *Puerto Argentino* (Port Stanley)—the Mirage exploded before landing, killing Cuerva. Perona's Mirage was hit by the missile from the second Harrier and the aircraft exploded in a ball of flame —he ejected as the nose section broke off and was picked up on the islands. On the sixth mission of the day, Jose Ardiles was killed in his Mirage by a Sidewinder from another Sea Harrier.

As a result of these heavy losses and the Vulcan attack on *Puerto Argentino,* it was decided to pull the Mirage IIIs back to the mainland to stand alert for a possible Vulcan attack on the three major attack bases in the south or against Buenos Aires. It was a hard decision to make but one which the High Command deemed necessary. With eight Mirage IIIs *Grupo 8* flew ninety sorties.

At Tandil we visited *VI Brigada Aerea* and *Grupo 6, II* and *III Escuadron de Caza,* which flies Israel Aircraft Industries *Neshers* or Daggers, Israeli versions of the Mirage 5. The *Grupo* is commanded by *Comodoro* Thomas Rodriguez. During the war, *II Escuadron* was under the command of *Mayor* Juan Sapolski at San Julian and *III Escuadron* was commanded by *Mayor* Carlos Martinez at Rio Grande, losing twelve aircraft (all but two to Sea Harriers) and five pilots in 160 sorties.

The great distance caused the Daggers to operate within very tight limits since they could not refuel but there was plenty of fuel to stay in the target area for at least three minutes, plenty with Sea Harriers around. If there was enough warning from either the radar at *Puerto Argentino* or if visual contact was made, the Daggers could easily outrun the Sea Harriers since the former could maintain .95 Mach—this would leave the British behind.

One tactic was to saturate the Sea Harrier orbit points with simultaneous attacks since the Daggers had no choice but to penetrate the Falklands/Malvinas in a straight line. As *Mayor* Sapolski recalled, "We knew the prospects of successfully hitting the targets were good but the prospects of returning were dim. So, we could say that the only impulse we had was to hit, hit and hit as many times as we could. This spirit of attack in the two squadrons was an innate condition, a natural condition, brought about by our sense of duty."

Primary attack formation was three line abreast against one ship

Typical scene at an Argentina air base—pilots relax and discuss a training flight. These pilots were all veterans of the air fighting.

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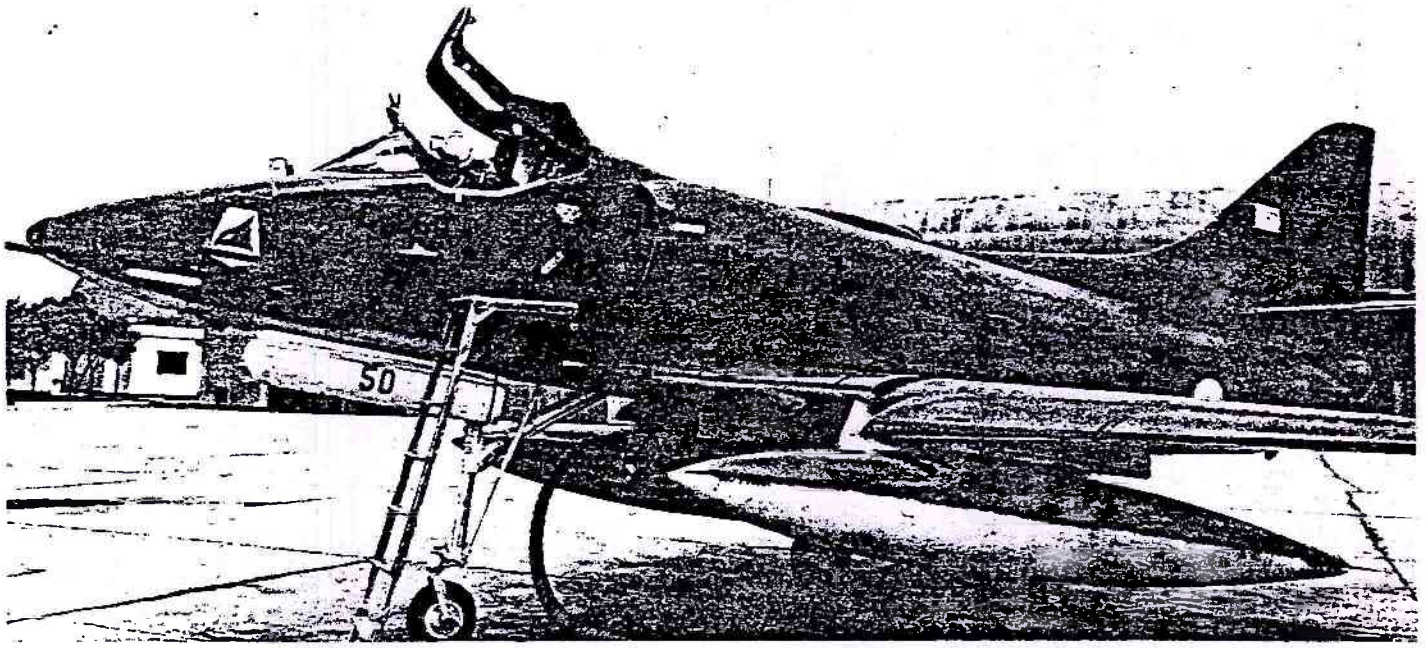


Ready to go. An Argentine Lt. Col. prepares to start his A-4B Skyhawk. Experience of the Argentine pilots that fought in the Falklands/Malvinas was quite varied since everyone from wing commanders to aviators just out of training were rotated through combat missions.

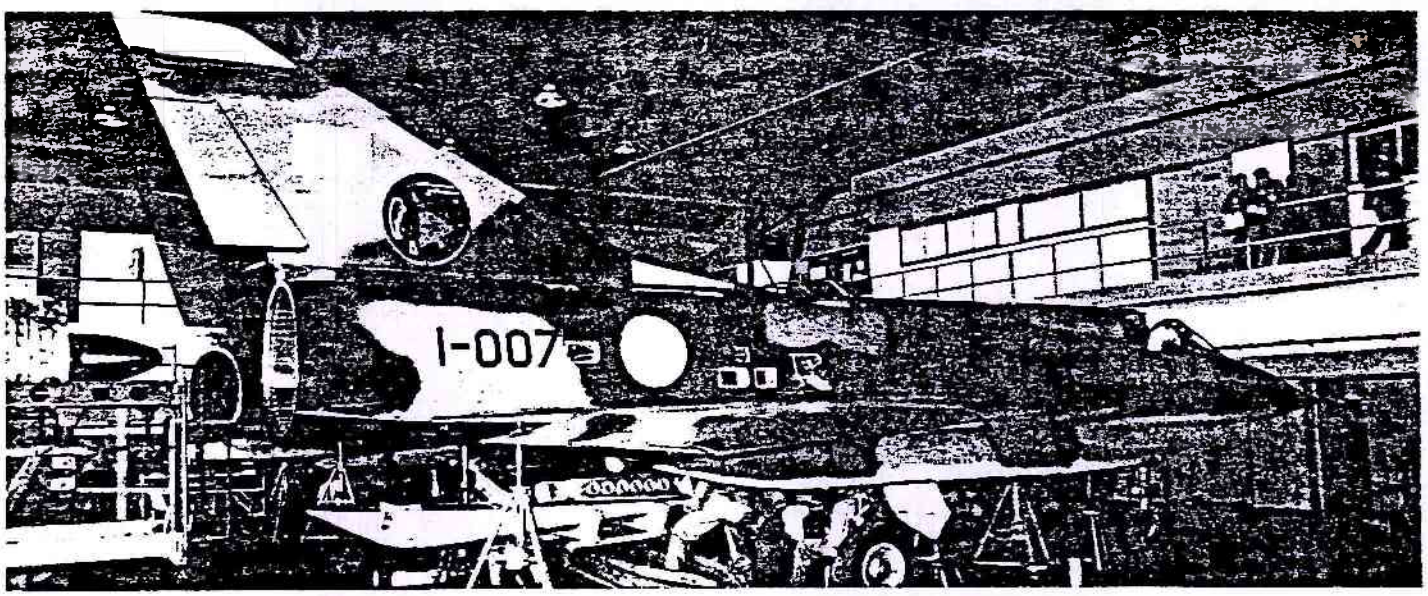
at a time at minimum altitude going 550 knots. Going into the target area, according to *Capitan* Horacio Gonzalez, was like running a gauntlet on his 24 May mission—he brought his flight of four through fifteen ships, dodging between them after dropping bombs to avoid getting hit by antiaircraft fire. Upon returning to base it was found that numbers 2, 3 and 4 had between two and six hits from AA artillery. Battle damage was repaired at Tandil if at all possible by ferrying aircraft back from Rio Gallegos and San Juan—two of the southerly bases used for the main attacks against the British.

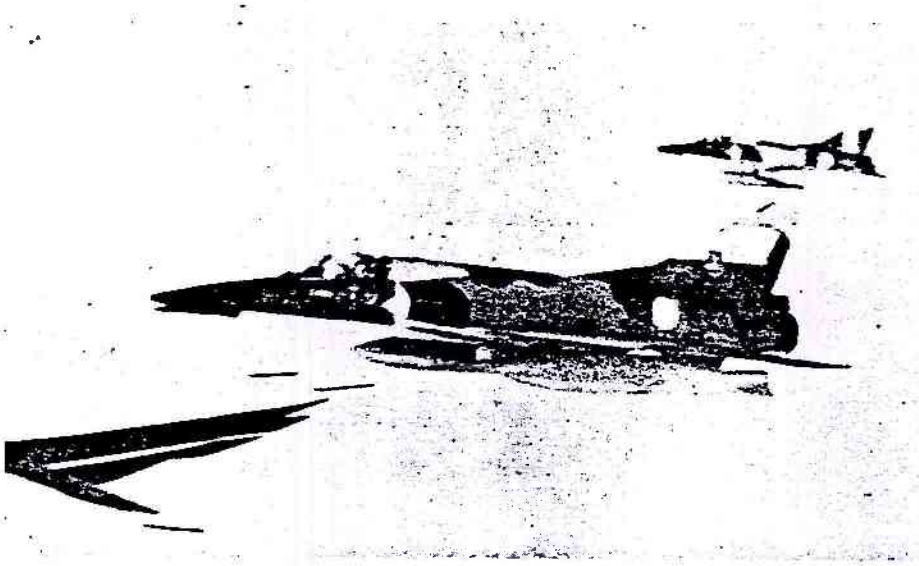
Mirage III being overhauled at Moreno. The Mirages were handicapped by range and the fact that they could not draw the Sea Harriers up to the higher altitudes where the Argentine pilots would have enjoyed an advantage. Many Mirages were reserved for what the Argentine high command felt was a very real risk of British bombing of the mainland.

1er Ten. Cesar Roman took part in the first attack on 1 May when the British fleet was approaching *Puerto Argentino.* His flight of three Daggers took on three ships line abreast—"#1 flashed over the second frigate like lightning as I took aim on my ship, which was ninety degrees from me. There was no AA fire since we caught them by surprise and all three of us continued right past the ships while picking up speed just over the surface of the water. At full power we started climbing, got over the cloud deck and then set a course of about 290 degrees for home base. Sea Harriers started to chase us but our air cover of Mirage IIIs was vectored to intercept—the three of us escaped."

Yeoman service was done throughout the war by *I Escuadron de Transporte,* El Palomar, with its C and KC-130s. These Hercules kept the forces in the islands continually supplied, flying in and out at night fifty feet off the water right up to the surrender. One Hercules flown by *Capitan* Ruben Martel, *Capitan* Carlos Krause and *Vcom.* Hugo Meisner (on loan from the Mirage unit) was shot down by a Sea Harrier on 1 June while the lumbering transport was trying to spot the British fleet.

At *Base Aeronaval Comandante* Espora the *Armada Argentina* has its major combat units in the *3a Escuadra Aeronaval*—the *2a* (Super Entendard) and the *3a* (A-4Q) *Escuadrilla de Caza y Ataque.* These units flew twenty-three sorties dur-





The Lear Jets of the Argentine Air Force performed superbly, carrying out photo recon missions and, as illustrated, guiding in attacks of Daggers with the Lear Jet's superior avionics. (FAA)

ing the war and accounted for three of the six ships sunk.

Teniente de navio (Lt) Benito Rotolo outlined the major A-4Q missions, highlighting the attacks on 21 and 23 May. On 21 May, Rotolo flew in the second section of three aircraft into the San Carlos Bay area. The first flight of three was led by *Capitan de corbeta* (Lt Cdr) Alberto Philippi with *Ten. de navio* Jose Arca and *Ten. de fragata* (Ltjg) Marcelo Marquez. Philippi led his A-4Qs in to attack the *HMS Ardent*, putting at least two bombs into the ship. They were then jumped by Sea Harriers—Philippi was downed by a Sidewinder but he ejected and was taken care of by a New Zealand family on the islands until being picked up by an Argentine helicopter. Arca's Skyhawk was damaged enough so that he was forced to divert to *Puerto Argentino*—he ejected over the area and came down in the water. Marquez was chased by a Sea Harrier and was downed by 30mm gunfire from the British fighter—he was killed.

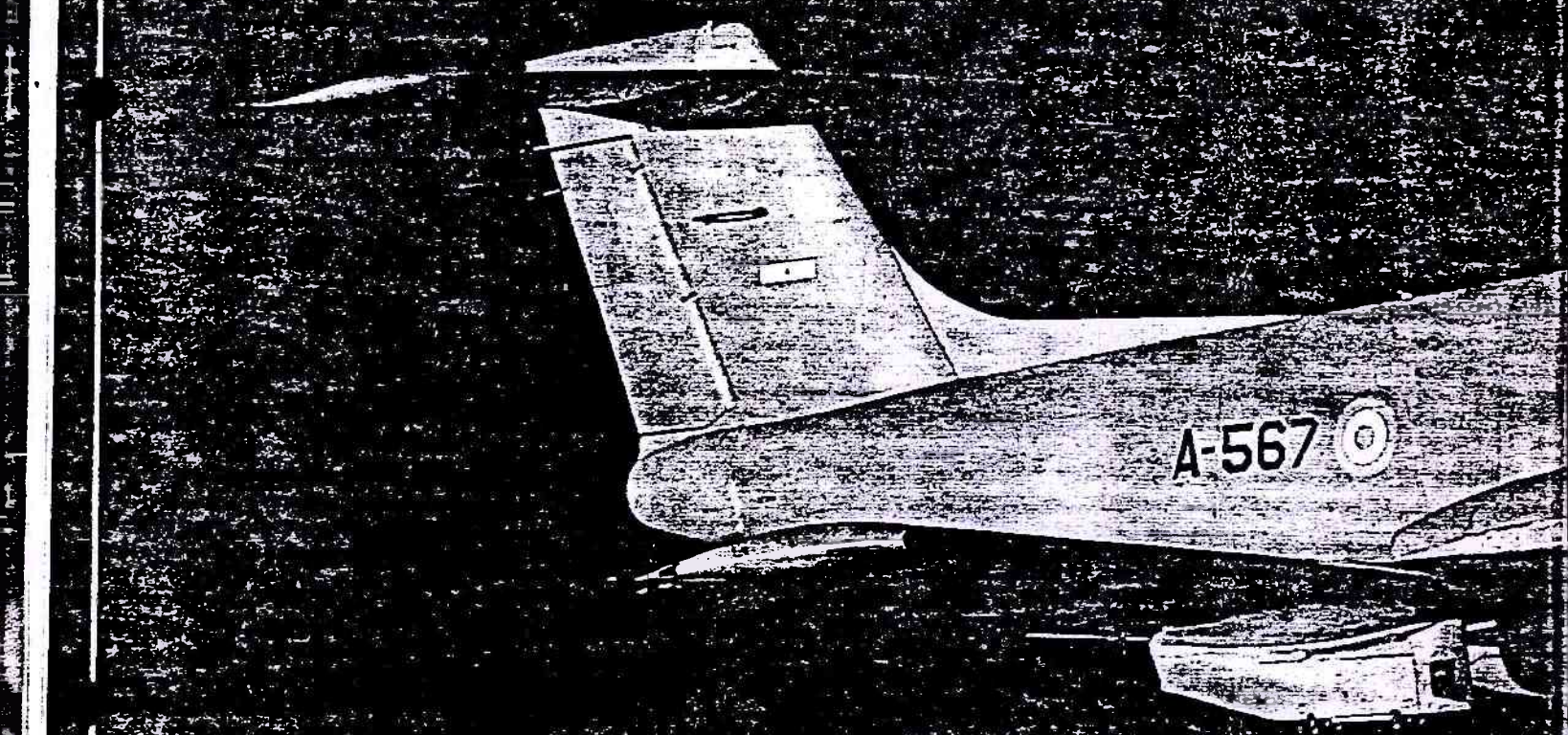
Rotolo came in behind this decimated flight and dropped the next stick of Snake-eye retarded bombs but did not hit anything. That was the Navy Skyhawk's first mission—three out of six downed. On the 23rd, four A-4Qs attacked San Carlos Bay led by squadron commander *Capitan de corbeta* Rodolfo Castro Fox. *Cap. de corbeta* Carlos Zubizarreta's Skyhawk was damaged and when he got back to Rio Grande he tried to eject as the fighter went off the side of the runway in a strong crosswind. Unfortunately the seat did not get far enough above the aircraft and he was killed. This left only two A-4Qs to carry on the rest of the war but they flew several harassment missions against ground targets in the Falklands/Malvinas.

Cap. de fragata Jorge Colombo, commander of the *2a Escuadrilla de Caza y Ataque*, had only a month or so to get his Super Entendards ready for combat. He had no help

(Continued on page 55)

Pilot of a Canberra bomber on a training flight. The Canberras were decimated by Royal Navy Sea Harriers and quickly switched to night bombing in an attempt to decrease losses.

FLYING TH



FLYING THE FMA IA58 GAVE AN IDEA OF WHAT THE RECENT FIGHTING IN THE FALKLANDS/MALVINAS WAS ALL ABOUT

By Jeff Ethell

Photography by Michael O'Leary

In the northern Argentine city of Cordoba lies the sprawling two million square foot *Fabrica Militar de Aviones* (Military Aircraft Factory) which has been turning out aircraft since 1927, the first of its kind in Latin America. Not only has the factory produced its own designs, but under license has built such notable machines as the Bristol Fighter, Curtiss Hawk 75 and Beech T-34. Throughout its history, the FMA has had an aggressive design team along with low, medium and high speed wind tunnels. In the early 1950s men like German FW 190 designer Kurt Tank produced advanced designs for jet fighters and transports. The only results were the *Pulqui I*, South America's first indigenous jet, and the *Pulqui II*,

IE PUCARA

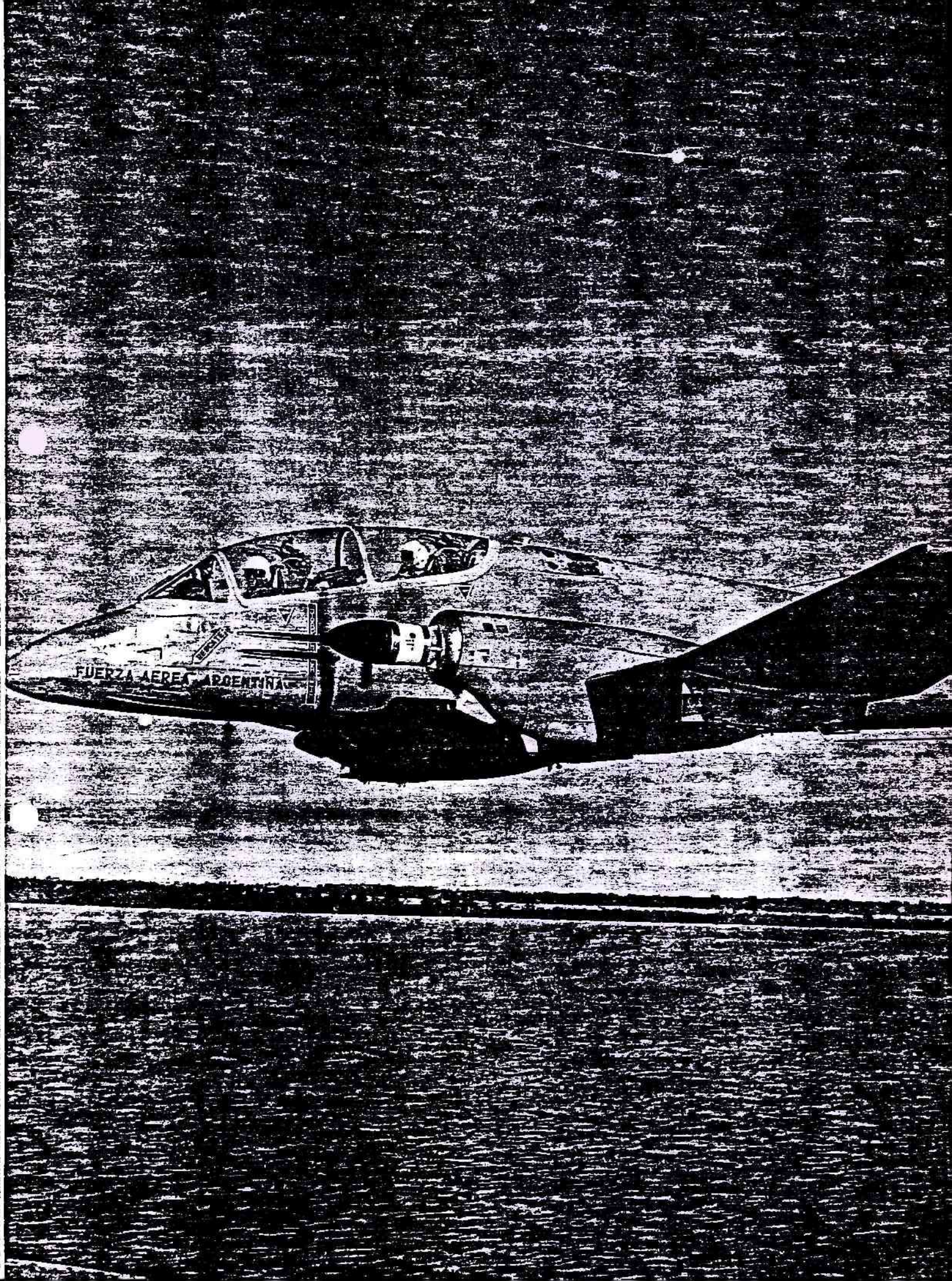
which came from Tank's World War Two Ta 183, on which the MiG-15 was based. One of Tank's 1950 wind tunnel models on display looked identical to the DC-9 except its engines were cleanly buried in the rear fuselage.

Twenty-eight prototypes have come out of the FMA so far and many have gone into production, including the twin turboprop sixteen-seater IA50 *Guarani* transport which serves the *Fuerza Aerea Argentina* (FAA or Argentine Air Force) as its primary utility aircraft.

However, as a result of the Falklands/Malvinas War, the most famous product of the FMA is the twin turboprop IA58A *Pucara* counterinsurgency (COIN) fighter. With first flights in 1969, the fighter, powered by two Turbomeca 988 shp engines, was delivered to the *II Escuadron de Exploracion y Ataque* (2nd Reconnaissance-Attack Squadron) at Reconquista in 1976. Since that time this squadron has remained the only *Pucara* unit and another twelve have gone to Uruguay. A second version with 30mm cannon, the IA58B, has been placed in production and a third, the IA66 with Garrett 1000 shp turboprops, is flying in prototype form.

Needless to say, a visit to the *II Escuadron* at Reconquista was essential not only because this unit was the only FAA squadron to be based in the Falklands/Malvinas throughout the war, but an invitation had been extended to fly the *Pucara* with pilots who had flow it in combat with the British.

Reconquista lies in the dry plains west of Buenos Aires and south of Cordoba. It gets hot and dusty there during summer but the large base is ideal for unlimited military training, in many ways similar to U.S. tactical training bases located in the southwest. Rivers wind through the flat countryside—as our *Guarani* transport banked around and let down for a landing and the base was a huge patch of concrete in the middle of


FUERZA AEREA ARGENTINA

nowhere. We had been putting quite a few hours on our faithful pugnosed IA50 and a landing was not unwelcomed.

As the door let down, our escort, *Vicecomodoro* Ricardo DiLiscia quickly deplaned and greeted *Comodoro* Hugo Giampaoletti, Commander *Grupo 3 de Ataque,* attached to *III Brigada Aerea.* As was the normal custom, we were treated to an excellent lunch and then headed for the *II Escuadron* headquarters and ready room. Waiting for us were several of the squadron's pilots who had been gathered to tell us about flying combat in the Falklands/Malvinas and to introduce us to the *Pucara.* As with all of the FAA squadrons we visited, one could have placed this group of men in America and been hard pressed to tell they were from another country. Nomex flight suits, American equipment and a blend of European physical features—Argentina is as much a mixing bowl as the U.S.

The *II Escuadron de Exploracion y Ataque* was right in the middle of the war, being based on the islands from late April until most of the members were captured on 13 June, a total of forty-four days. Flying out of nineteen different unprepared airstrips no more than two days at a time, they continually had to dodge RAF Harrier ground attacks and Sea Harriers in the air, losing three of their fighters to small Blowpipe missiles, one to a Harrier, one to a ship missile and one which hit a cluster bomb on take-off. Only two pilots were killed. The remainder of their twenty-four aircraft were either destroyed on the ground or captured by the British at the surrender (the British have thirteen in various states of damage). Most of their ground attack missions against British troops were flown in extremely poor weather which kept them free of Harriers—but flying in a mile visibility and under a 100 foot ceiling at 250 knots demands utmost concentration. Not one pilot was lost due to running into the ground. Speed had to be kept up in order to fly through the heavy small arms fire but the Blowpipe shoulder launched missile proved to be more dangerous because the missile was almost impossible to see. Pilots found they could outmaneuver it if spotted, but that was a difficult proposition.

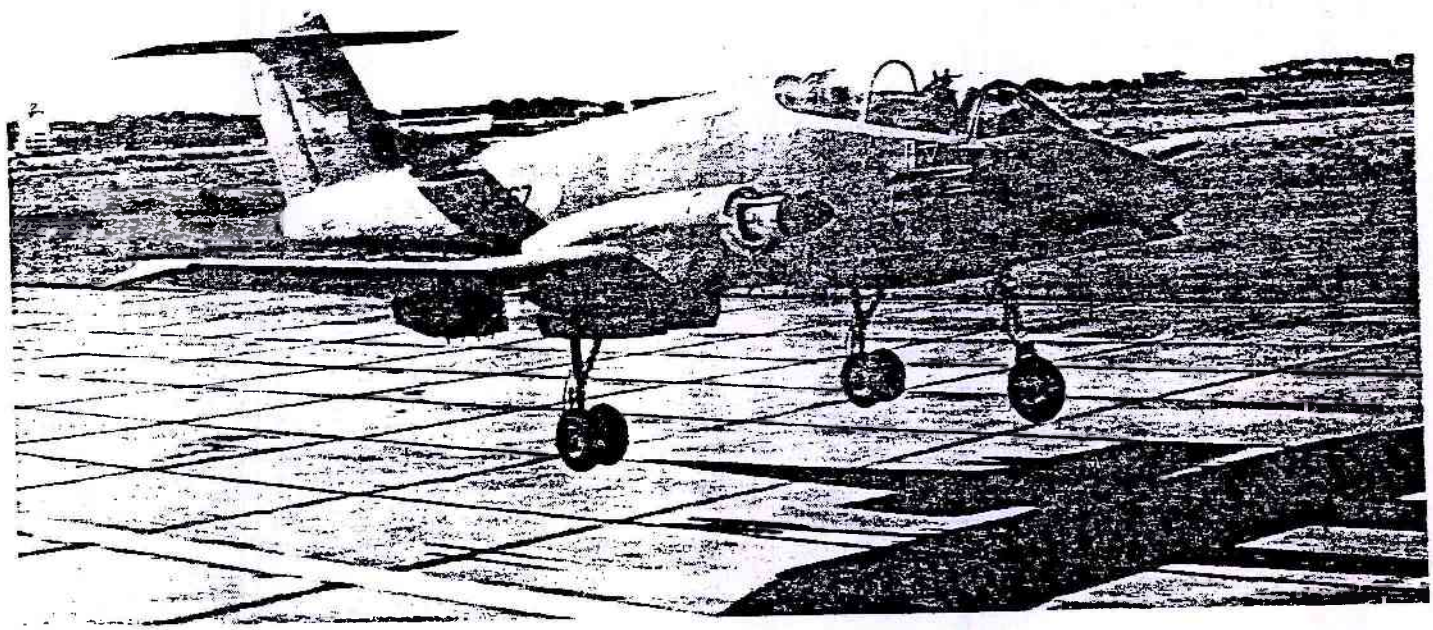
The *Pucara* proved able to take a great deal of battle damage—often aircraft would return to base full of holes, controls shot out, canopies blown off, one engine out. Due to a simple, robust structure, the damaged machines were repaired, often with some rough patching, and put back into service.

CAPITAN JORGE BENETIZ WAS HIT BY A BLOWpipe near San Carlos on 21 May—he was able to retain control for about a minute but then had to eject into the middle of an area held by British troops. He evaded toward Goose Green and after walking for ten hours linked up with Argentine troops and continued to fly combat. He was captured with most of the squadron on 13 June and remainded a prisoner for a month. *Capitan* Roberto Vila was hit by a Blowpipe the same day, ejecting safely only thirty ft. above the ground—the British Martin-Baker zero/zero seats installed in the IA58 proved to be excellent.

Three Harriers bounced *Mayor* Juan Tomba and *Teniente* Juan Micheloud the same day. Lt. Cdr. Sharkey Ward of Royal Navy 801 Squadron, *Invincible,* managed to get behind Tomba and fired his 30mm cannon at the *Pucara* as both aircraft zoomed through a canyon. Tomba watched the rounds chew up his right wing—on Ward's second pass, the 30mm guns virtually sawed off Tomba's right wing and he ejected safely over Goose Green and was returned to the squadron.

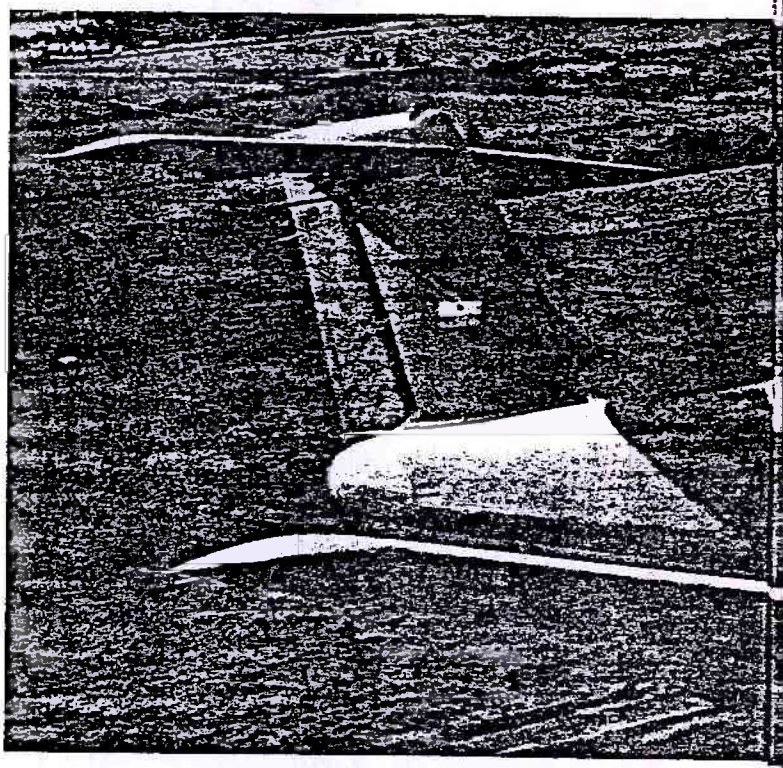
II Escuadron claimed two British helicopters downed

That concrete runway is a luxury for the Pucara's rugged landing gear. Many of the strips used in the Falklands/Malvinas conflict were little better than sheep runs but the Pucara operated admirably.

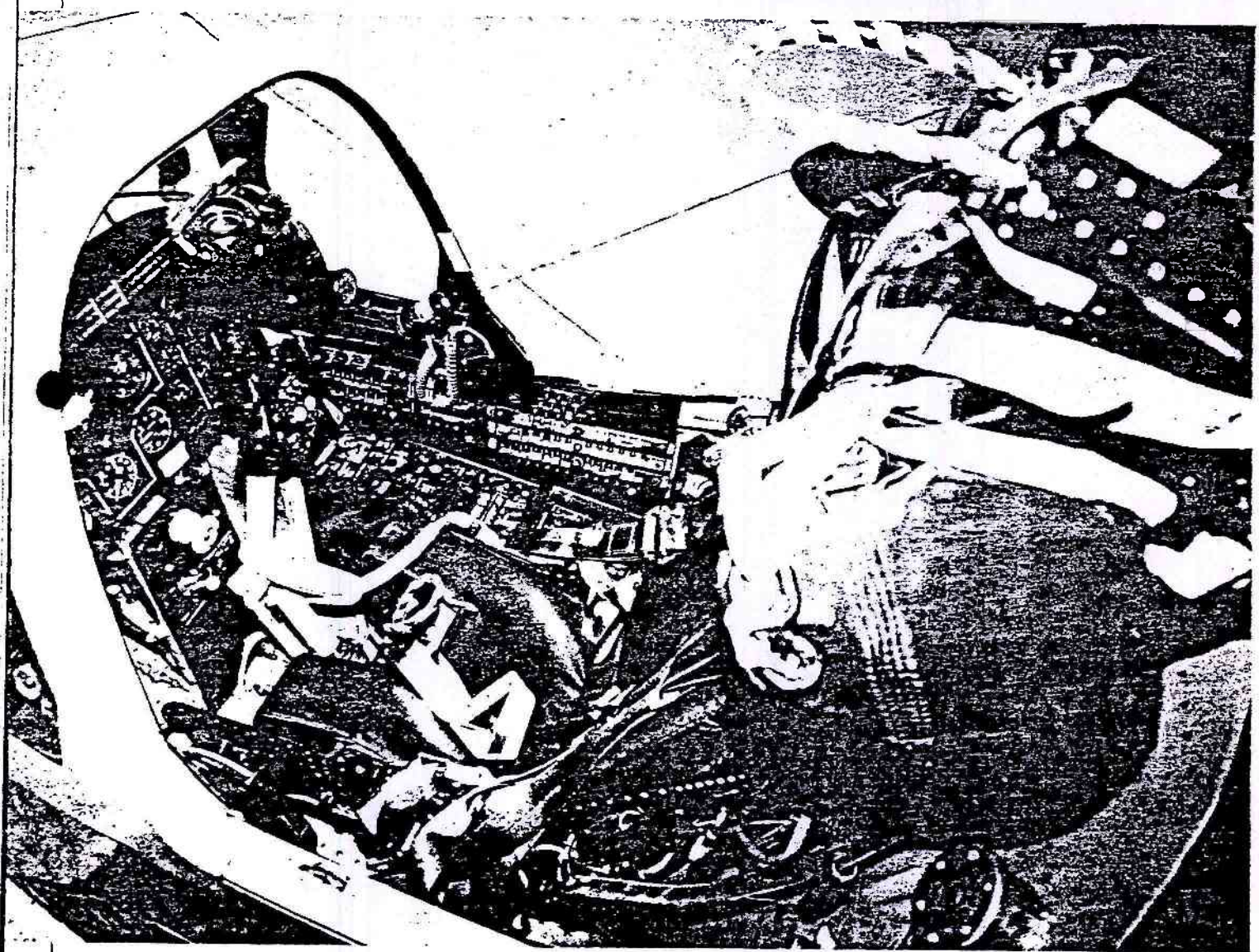


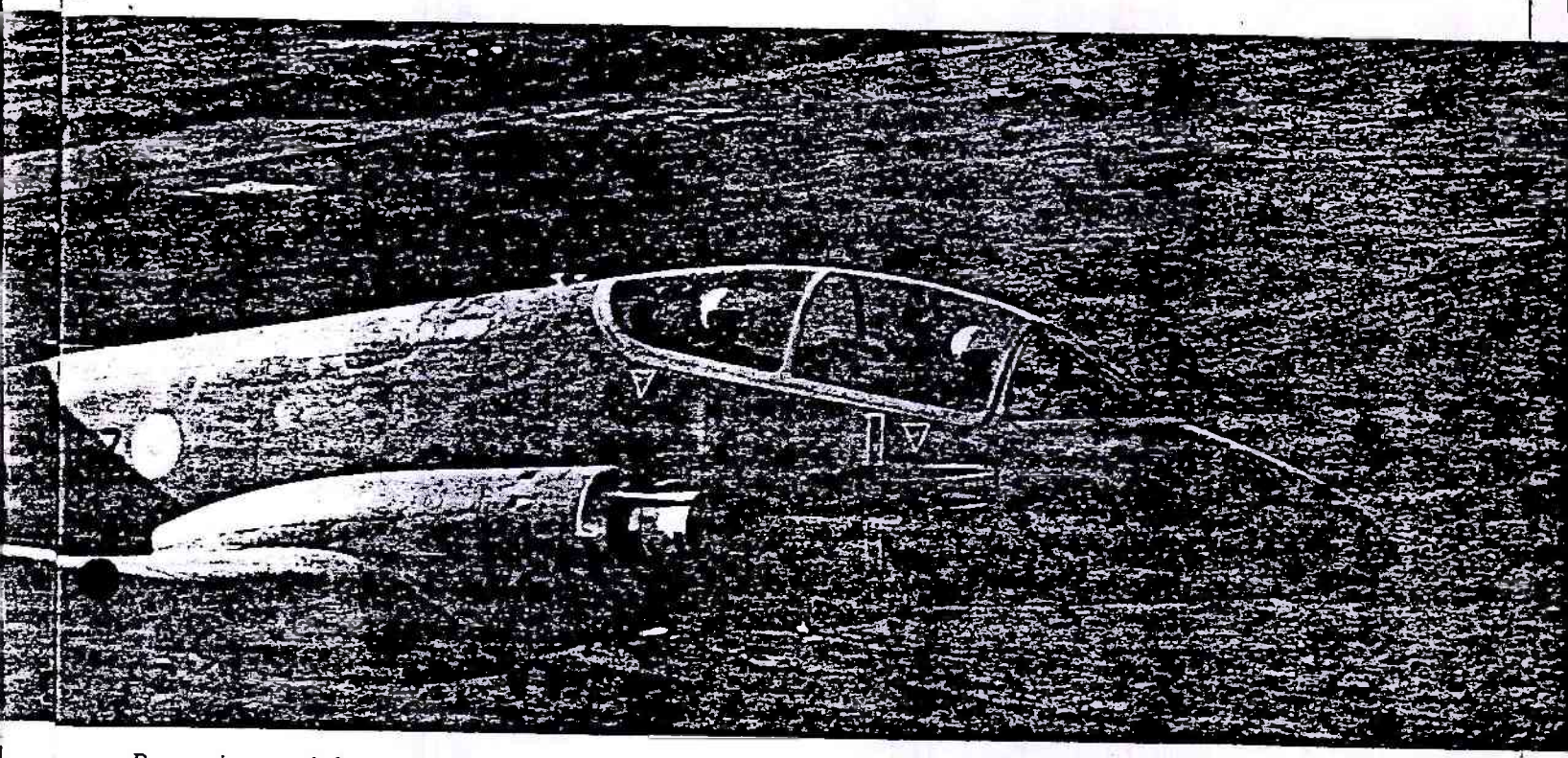
The terrible weather in the Falklands/Malvinas was worse than either the British or the Argentines expected. Some Pucaras were literally bogged down in the mire created by heavy rains where they made easy targets for marauding British aircraft.

around 27 May, flying 186 missions total during the war. The wet weather made a nightmare of the aircraft's electrical systems with poor microswitches shorting out often. Almost eighty percent of the missions were flown from dirt or grass strips about 1,500 ft. long and 25 feet wide but the *Pucara*, fully loaded with 3,000 pounds of bombs and rockets, could normally get out with no trouble and could land in 325 ft. with fully reversible props. The soft fields had to be checked very carefully since the rain would often cause the mud to bog the wheels. The four 7.62mm machine guns, two 20mm cannon and rockets proved to be very effective and with a combat wing loading of 34 lbs./sq. ft., the



The well-equipped and comfortable cockpit of the Pucara. Our only complaint was the incredible strapping-in procedure that left one feeling a bit like an Egyptian mummy. Visibility was absolutely superb from the cockpit.





Pucara is one of the most maneuverable combat aircraft in the world.

Having flown the OV-10 in both the USAF and the USMC, I was looking forward to seeing how the Argentinians had done in designing a similar aircraft, although the mission requirements driving the design were different. The Bronco was not a COIN aircraft while the *Pucara* was to carry quite a healthy load of external stores.

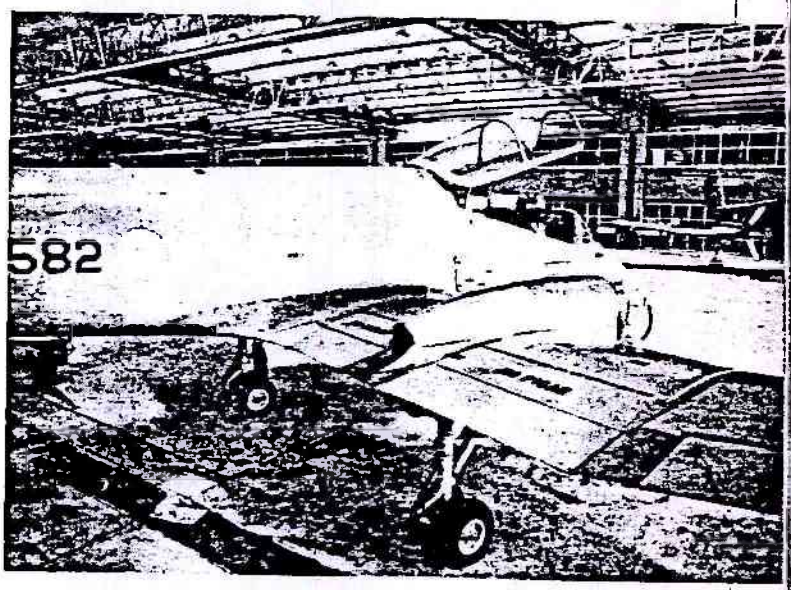
Capitan Roberto Vila would fly with me while *Capitan* Ricardo Grunert would fly with Michael O'Leary for the photos. Roberto and I talked about the mission profile and he wanted to know if I really wanted to fly simulating the combat missions flown in the Falklands/Malvinas—I replied with a definite affirmative. He and Grunert, the son of the radio operator on the German pocket battleship *Graf Spee* which was scuttled in 1940 near Montevideo, grinned and said we were in for a good flight.

We suited up, checked the American-made helmets and masks, and walked out to the squadron line. It was impressive to see so many IA58s in several different paint schemes—I would be flying one which had the special Malvinas camouflage. The first thing that catches the eye is the size of the machine—it is large with the tail soaring 17 ft. 7 in. above the ground. Preflighting revealed the high standard of factory workmanship, as befits a modern military aircraft. Looking over the entire line of aircraft, one did not find hydraulic fluid, engine oil or fuel puddles on the ramp. The aircraft has proven to be simple and reliable with a very high in commission rate.

UP THE LADDER AND INTO THE COCKPIT. THE front office looks very much like many American fighters—visibility over the front is excellent, much like the A-10 due to the lack of a nose to speak of. I crawled into the back to strap in and found the only serious drawback to the entire process—the Martin-Baker seat is a nightmare of spaghetti with leg straps, waist straps, chest straps, shoulder straps all intertwining in complex fashion. Then one has to strap the lap and shoulder belts over that. I thought the F-4 system was bad but this one makes it look like child's play. After several tries at getting it properly hooked up, the ground crewman finally came up and took a good five minutes to get me bolted to both parachute and aircraft.

Roberto indicated start up and both aircraft whined into life. With the canopy down, much of the noise was damped out and I never did find the props to be annoying as in the OV-10 where genuine fatigue results from the whine and vibration. The seat cushion had

A partial view of the modern FMA factory at Cordoba where Pucaras are built. The company is building a follow on order for Pucaras to replace combat losses and increase the force. Orders for foreign governments are also being assembled. Fine workmanship was evident on all aircraft that we inspected.



to be a pilot's innovation—it was actually comfortable throughout the mission. Ricardo followed us out to the active in quick order and then we lined up for take-off after run-up. Power up on the Turbomecas, brake release and good healthy acceleration. We were off well short of 900 ft. and climbing at 3,500 fpm in formation. Roberto flew good, smooth, tight formation with Ricardo as we flew away from the base. Then we separated into battle formation and dropped down toward the ground.

Soon we were bare feet above the ground at 270 knots, flying around trees and down into fields. Terrain masking is the key to survival in modern combat and the Malvinas War was no different. Ricardo called out a ship on the river, just visible over the trees, as a target. We popped over the last set of trees and flattened out on the river—lower, lower until the shadow of Ricardo and Michael's fighter was merging with the aircraft itself. We could not have been any higher than three ft. over the water, turning around each bend in the river waiting for the ship to appear. There it was—in seconds we were upon it and well below deck level. At the last minute we pulled hard over the vessel, then pushed right back down on the water while turning hard to get behind the trees again. Both Vila and Grunert were as comfortable as they could be—relaxed and calling attack changes. After all, this was a piece of cake—no Blowpipes, Harriers or British troops firing away below. Low flying is simple when no one is trying to kill you.

I have done my share of low flying with American military squadrons for over ten years but have never had the opportunity to fly this low for this long—at first I had my heart in my throat but as the smooth skill of both pilots became evident, I began to relax. Argentine pilots are some of the best stick and rudder men I have ever flown with, as was evident during the war.

After making several runs on the deck, Michael indicated he had the photos he needed so he and Ricardo headed for some aerobatics before returning to Reconquista. Roberto and I also headed up for some aerobatics. At 7,000 ft. Roberto showed me the basic entry speeds, did a few rolls and loops, then turned me loose. With a maximum diving speed of 405 kts. I did not have to worry about overdoing it—almost anything can be done at 250 kts. or lower.

Taking the controls, one of the most interesting things about the aircraft was immediately apparent—the rudder pedals are straight out of a Messerschmitt 109, revealing the strong German influence in Argentina's designs. Each pedal is shaped like a shoe with troughs to hold the heels from slipping off the bottom. This gives almost too much rudder authority. I found myself having to consciously hold pressure off the pedals so that one foot would not drift in front of the other until I wanted it to. Actually the *Pucara* can be flown with stick alone, as with most modern jets, but when rudder is needed one can really punch it. Brake authority is also enhanced.

THE STICK IS SPLIT IN THE CENTER LIKE A SPITfire so that aileron movement does not result in hitting the legs—fore and aft movement is normal. As with the Spit, this split feature lends itself to rapid control input and I found all control inputs to be effortless. Though the controls are not boosted, they certainly feel that way. Throttle response is immediate and the Turbomeca Astazou engines have proven to be good performers in spite of early engine surging problems. Visibility out of both seats is excellent, particularly due to the low profile of the engine cowlings.

After a few wingovers I tried my first roll—the *Pucara* is very solid and it was on rails all the way around. For the next roll I tried more control deflection and then finally was doing full deflection rolls one after the other. Marvelous. This had the OV-10 beat by a long shot—the *Pucara* felt light a fighter. Loops came with the same effortlessness and Cuban Eights were even better.

Slow speed maneuvers were the same and there wasn't a mean bone in her body—stall with gear and flaps up was 67 kts., giving a wide range of maneuver options, and stalls were not violent in the least.

After running out of reasons to play, I reluctantly headed back for Reconquista. Roberto had been very pleased with the flight and we found ourselves discussing military pilots around the world. They are all the same, regardless of nationality, with a love for the machines and missions they fly. Several times he expressed admiration for his British adversaries and noted how well they had treated Argentine prisoners of war.

Now it was his turn—as we neared the base, Roberto rolled over and spit-S'd for the center of the ramp. I could see Michael and Ricardo down there along with the squadron pilots and Brigade brass. We had really been tearing up the countryside so I gathered there was no such thing as getting violated for buzzing—but to flat hat the base with the commanding general down there?

We pulled out right on the deck, screaming for the audience at over 300 kts. Directly in front of them Roberto pulled up into a loop and came down the other side over the runway—back up into another loop, from which he pulled into a beautiful Cuban Eight, each time coming down to a few feet above the concrete. Then a roll on top of a loop, back down to cut the grass at the end of the runway and then roll over Brigade headquarters! I could see this happening at Nellis or Miramar—the poor guy would be hauled out and eaten for dinner.

Roberto came over the radio, "Do you want to do anything else?" I was tempted to try my hand at a few maneuvers over the base but I reluctantly told him to go on in. We quickly broke into the pattern, settled onto final and touched down on the numbers with a firm jolt, much like a Navy carrier landing, then reversed the props—we had stopped rolling in under 200 ft. Back to the parking space, Roberto pulled up in front of our slot, turned the tail then backed into the space. An impressive display from beginning to end.

I climbed out happy with the mission—I got a good look at what it was like to fly in the Falklands/Malvinas, what kind of pilots the Argentines are and the quality of the product they build. What a shame nations have to go to war to settle their differences. If one could put the pilots of Britain and Argentina in the same room without their governments knowing about it, little time would go by before you would not be able to tell one military aviator from another. □

build a road to my house (dig me a well, give me a motor-car, or whatever), and I'm sure I could get Salem es Saiq (or whoever) to surrender. Of course Salem es Saiq has already made an arrangement with the sheikh, either to surrender or just to change sides temporarily; he may have a personal score to settle, or he may be an infiltrator. If so, however, there is at least a chance that he may be observed; and also that he may observe the increasing prosperity of Dhofar against the tightening scarcities of the PDRY. There is also a risk that he may compare it with the oil riches of the northern Gulf states, and become a subject for created discontent.

An attack out of the PDRY into Dhofar now—a re-play of the last war there—would almost certainly be defeated; and this fact must be clear to the Warsaw Pact advisers who still ornament PDRY Brigade Headquarters, even if it were not so to the Yemenis themselves. Yet in the last months there has been an observed increase in cash and activity across the border. There is no evidence that the advisers have been reduced in number; and presumably they are not there just for the climate. It could be that a diversionary operation is in view. To the north of Oman the United Arab Emirates present a soft target. If they were attacked, a defence mounted from Saudi Arabia would not be a likely winner; but Oman would certainly commit her now very well trained and equipped forces. It might therefore make Soviet sense, at a picked moment, to engage those forces on a far-away front.

The Falklands: Joint Warfare Justified

By Rear Admiral E. F. GUERITZ, CB, OBE, DSC

Consultant to the RUSI

On 5 May 1942 British Forces landed in Courrier Bay on the North-West coast of Madagascar. The expedition had sailed from Scotland six weeks before and, after a brief stop at Durban, surprised the Vichy French garrison by entering the Bay at night, a feat considered impossible by the French Command. The boldness of the plan was epitomised by the way in which the Union Castle liner *Winchester Castle* negotiated the hazardous entry channels, avoided a minefield and landed No 5 Commando under the guns of the fortress.

Almost exactly 40 years later on 21 May 1982, British forces landed by night in San Carlos Bay, on East Falkland Island. The expedition had sailed from the United Kingdom on 5 April and, after some reshuffling of loads off Ascension Island, surprised the Argentine garrison of the Falklands by the boldness of the night approach. This included bringing the liner *Canberra* into the restricted waters of Falklands Sound and San Carlos water to disembark 3,000 men. The landing forces, both in Madagascar and the Falklands, were commanded by Major-Generals of the Marines (Robert Sturges in 1942 and Jeremy Moore in 1982).

These small similarities apart, the liberation of the Falkland Islands must be considered as a quite exceptional feat of arms and a stirring example of cooperative endeavour. It is too early to do justice to the many remarkable achievements or recognise the moral courage by which the enterprise was inspired and carried through. Full assessments must await the despatches of the Commanders of the Force and the comments of their superiors. Detailed reports and analysis will be needed to assess weapon effectiveness, performance of equipment and machinery, logistic strengths and weaknesses and all those other elements, human and material, which are the constituents of fighting efficiency. The Falkland Islands and their dependencies have been liberated but no general cease-fire in the South Atlantic has been declared. The future security of the Islands is a matter of serious concern for the British Prime Minister and her advisers. Public comment on the dramatic events of the past few months needs to be restrained by the continuing possibility of giving away useful information. Subject to these limitations the purpose of this article is to review some aspects of the operation with an eye to future study and discussion.

Nothing that follows should be taken as subtracting one jot from the unstinted admiration which the writer has conceived for the Falklands Expedition and all who have contributed to it. The assembly and despatch of the essential nucleus of aircraft carriers and landing ships with their respective loads of men, aircraft, helicopters and other equipment was a great achievement. The mustering of a fleet of transports for men and equipment, of tankers and supply ships to sustain the fleet and feed and water all the men and women in it, converting ships to minister to the sick and wounded, to carry aircraft, to sweep for mines, to patch up action damage, all this and more, involved the skill and devoted work of men and women up and down the country, ashore and afloat, Service and civilian, not forgetting those in Gibraltar

and Ascension. The magnitude of this successful enterprise is only outlined by the list of ships with which this article is ended. There may have been flaws and faults but the true judgment lies in the fact that Her Majesty's Forces travelled 8,000 miles, liberated British territory the size of Wales against numerically superior land and air forces and freed 1,800 of our fellow citizens at the cost of the lives of three of the local inhabitants and 259 of our Servicemen.

During the process our forces blockaded the Falklands by sea and air, liberated South Georgia, 800 more miles distant, sank a cruiser, crippled a submarine, bottled up the rest of the Argentine Navy, captured and and then repatriated more than 10,000 prisoners, destroyed 80 aircraft and helicopters and captured 50 more.

This almost incredible success has been achieved by exceptional periods of continuous steaming, unheard of sortie raids and feats of pilot endurance, (including Ascension to Falklands and back), sustained demonstrations of physical fitness and fighting efficiency and by the unremitting care and skill displayed alike by men and women responsible for maintaining the machines and giving succour to the wounded. All this has been done in extremely trying climatic conditions with the onset of the Atlantic winter.

The first conclusion to be drawn is one of firm confirmation of the value of the high standards of training which can be attained with professional forces. Professionalism is a word much used in commentaries on the actions and activities on our forces.

Joint Warfare

All in all, the Falklands Expedition has called upon the full range of tactics, techniques and procedures which in British parlance are embraced within the term Joint Warfare. For those who have been concerned with Joint Warfare doctrine and training in recent years there can be cause for satisfaction over the justification of their persistence.

At many times in the post-war period it has been a struggle to keep alive the principles and practices by which land, sea and airforces can operate in harmony to exploit mobility and firepower in pursuit of national objectives. It is somewhat ironic that the Royal Navy, which has frequently been backward in these matters, has had the major part to play in making the Expedition possible.

It was said of the landing in Madagascar that this was the first successful combined operation carried out by the British since Quebec in 1759. This may be unfair and hardly does justice to the British forces in Aboukir Bay in 1801, but there is an element of truth in the assertion. It is a curious fact that the British, who have achieved so much by the exercise of sea power have, generation by generation, disdained the art of projecting power by the landing of forces in a fighting posture. The Royal Marines have an almost unbroken record of service since 1664 but the Royal Navy's attitude to the means of ship-to-shore movement for landing forces has, to put it mildly, been grudging. For example, special boats for landing troops were commissioned in 1709[1] and others were available for Abercromby's troops at Aboukir a century later, yet in 1914–15 and 1939–40 the Royal Navy lacked efficient landing craft. The only element of continuity in policy through the years has been that of neglect.

In the recent past, the supplementary Defence White Paper of July 1981 entitled "The Way Forward"[2] had struck a curious note of logic:

> Three Royal Marine Commandos will be maintained, as at present. The Government regards their special experience and versatility as of high value for tasks both in and beyond the NATO area. It had already been decided that likely needs did not warrant replacement of the specialised amphibious ships *Intrepid* and *Fearless*; and these ships will now be phased out earlier, in 1982 and 1984 respectively.

Again, therefore, there would have been skilled landing forces without the shipping dedicated for their use. The decision on *Fearless* and *Intrepid* was reversed some weeks before the Falklands crisis. No doubt they and their landing craft have played important roles in recent operations. One could wish that evidence was forthcoming, that the Naval Staff is siezed of the need to provide means of carrying landing craft and troop lift helicopters, together with Royal Marines and their equipment. Perhaps *Fearless and Intrepid* are too expensive in manpower as well as in money terms. Ingenuity and improvisations provided shipping lift for assault troops in the 1940s. The *Uganda* has been employed as a hospital ship in the present operation but her name had been mentioned as a potential transport for the Royal Marines before the Falkland Crises, cost could be shared with the Department of Education which has used the ship for educational Cruises for children. More Landing Ships Logistic (LSL) will be needed to replace *Sir Tristram* and *Sir Galahad* wrecked in the recent operations. The Royal Navy could add to the order with a bid for two or more for the Royal Marines.

One age-old lesson which was re-learned was "Do not put all your tents into one ship". The loss of the *Atlantic Conveyer* was a grievous blow. Helicopters as well as tents were lost but it was understandable that her role as a transport for Harriers offered the opportunity for a very substantial lift of other stores and equipment.

Command and Control

Many words have been spoken and written, in the context of nuclear deterrence, about the importance of political will. Misgivings have been expressed about the difficulty of obtaining timely political decisions in order that military dispositions can be made, reserves called out, mobile forces deployed and other preparations made. Such problems are not peculiar to nuclear situations and they can bedevil the task of military planners not least the logisticians. The record of the Norwegian campaign in 1940 abounds with stories of order and counterorder resulting in confusion over the cargoes to be loaded and the sequence of their loading. The Suez operation has been described as a military miracle performed amidst political disaster.[3]

Political indecision resulted in a dispersion of logistics resources with the possibility of grave consequence within the limits of Whitehall approval. From the evidence available to the public the political direction of the Falklands operation has been firm and consistent. Some doubts were expressed about political restraints being imposed in relation to the timing of the main landings on the Falklands. These have been dispelled by firm statements from the Chief of the Defence Staff, Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Terence Lewin, speaking at the Institute's Annual Conference in July. He is quoted as saying "Every military option that we put forward was approved as we wanted it: often I was given covering political approval in anticipation of the event". The Admiral of the Fleet is the first holder of his office to provide the sole military input to the War Cabinet and then transmit the Whitehall decisions to his colleagues on the Chief of Staff Committee. This procedure reflects the move away from the collective role of the Committee in tendering advice to Ministers. Following the recent reorganisation of Ministerial responsibilities in the Ministry of Defence greater stress has been placed on the Chief of the Defence Staff's own advice. It is, of course, equally his task to shield Service commanders from any attempts at "back-seat driving". There is a nice balance to be struck. The Armed Forces have to be a sensitive instrument of Government policy and one could observe the part which the deployment of the Task Forces played in strengthening the British negotiating position in April and early May. At the same time operations and landing operations in particular have to be timed to suit many factors not least the weather. Freedom of action then becomes essential.

Command of the Force has been vested in the Commander-in-Chief Fleet with his resident colleague the Air Officer Commanding No 18 goup RAF as his Air Deputy. These officers are colocated at Northwood, near London, and work together on NATO as well as national commitments. The General Officer Commanding South East District has acted as Land Force Deputy. His Headquarters are at Aldershot. The Naval Commander of the Force holds the appointment of Flag Officer First Flotilla and the Landing Force Commander was the Major General Commando Forces Royal Marines. In passing it can be remarked that one of the key decisions for a Force Commander is when to go where he can lead and when to stay where he can command. There are examples of amphibious operations failing for want of leadership at the top and others because the Commander was away from his headquarters or otherwise separated from effective communications. General Moore had to decide when to move from Northwood to Ascension, when to move from Ascension to a command post afloat and when to take command ashore. It will be very interesting to hear how the Command and Control arrangements worked over the great distances involved and to hear how the mounting of the operation, deployment of reinforcements, air plans and not least the logistic support have been conducted. The absence of a mobile force headquarters, such as that provided by 3 Division in the late 1960s and early 1970s may have been felt, although Headquarters 5 Infantry Brigade had been given a role in this respect in the 1982 Defence White Paper. In the previous year an existing two-star headquarters had been remarked upon in similar vein.[4]

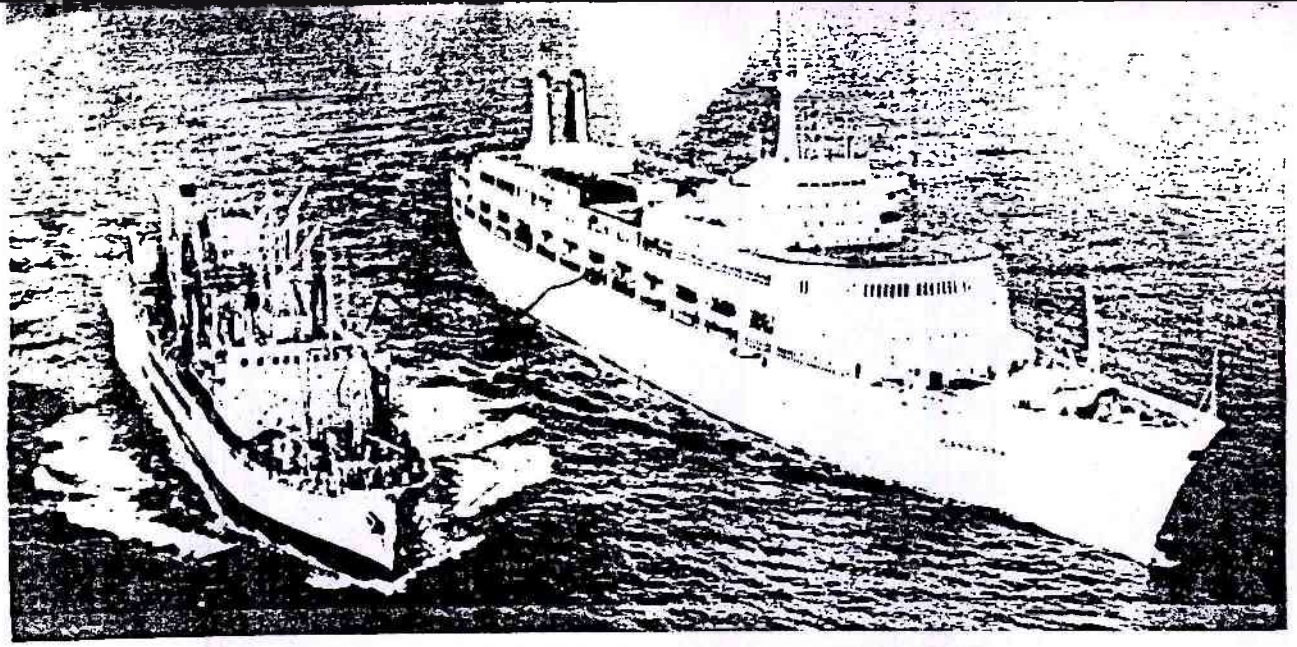
Ships and weapons

It seems probable that the conduct of operations in the South Atlantic will have called in question the balance of importance between speed and endurance in the choice of propulsion for frigates and destroyers. The burden of replenishment at very frequent intervals must have strained logistic resources as well as taxing the endurance of captains and ship commanders. The very heavy demands for replenishment will have fallen hardest on the ships with the full outfit of equipment. It may be necessary to develop a system of reserve support ships fitted and available on call from trade. This emphasises the importance of reviewing the question of subsidies to companies to include some naval features in their ships when building or refitting, as was the case with stiffening for guns in merchant ships between the wars.

Similarly, the conversion of merchant vessels to carry aircraft at very short notice raises the question of resurrecting Woolworth carrier designs to provide a more practical number of "aircraft carriers" than the two or perhaps three to which we are restricted by present costs. The doctrine of administrative impossibility and professional reluctance has taken a severe knock in recent weeks and the time is therefore ripe for every sort of improvisation and originality to be given sympathetic vein. The 1982 White Paper seems to be encouraging thought in this direction with its emphasis on the use of National resources.[5] The fishing Industry has been called in to help with trawlers converted to minesweepers and an oil rig support ship to help with repairs. Once again therefore the elements of maritime power are working in harmony for a common purpose. The danger is that if the United Kingdom and its Allies fail to support their mercantile and fishing fleets, one day they may be called upon in vain. For example, it is questionable whether BP will have 12 tankers for the Royal Navy to press into service again.

Public interest has centred on the combustibility of materials used in the construction, fitting and furnishing of HM ships. The incidence of noxious gas appears to have been a significant factor in which the composition of the insulation of ships wiring, furniture and bedding may have played sinister parts. Apart from reducing these hazards it seems necessary to review the scale of issue of breathing sets for ships' companies. The layout of ships appears to need review again. It has been suggested that lessons from the past have been set aside in modern construction. Thus the hit on the Control room of HMS *Sheffield* reputedly left the ship with no power and no pumps. Alternative sources of power, duplication of pumps forward and aft, secondary lighting, were commonplace in the past.

The use of aluminium in ship construction has been much discussed in recent years (for example in *Modern Warship Design and Development* by Norman Friedman[6]). The melting point of aluminium is a relevant factor when considering the heat generated by main propulsion gas turbines quite apart from the heat of



An RFA tanker refuels SS *Canberra* in the South Atlantic. (*MOD*)

an explosion or burning missile fuel. One can only be comforted at the comparative lightness of the casualty lists in ships which became total losses.

The assessment of damage to naval vessels will provide much food for thought. The heaviest loss of life was caused by torpedoes (the Argentine *General Belgrano*).[7] HM Ships such as *Glasgow* were fortunate not to have suffered heavier damage from bombs which hit but did not explode. The relative success of missiles and bombs will need analyses but the impact of Exocet missiles has been the most dramatic and ostensibly the most significant.

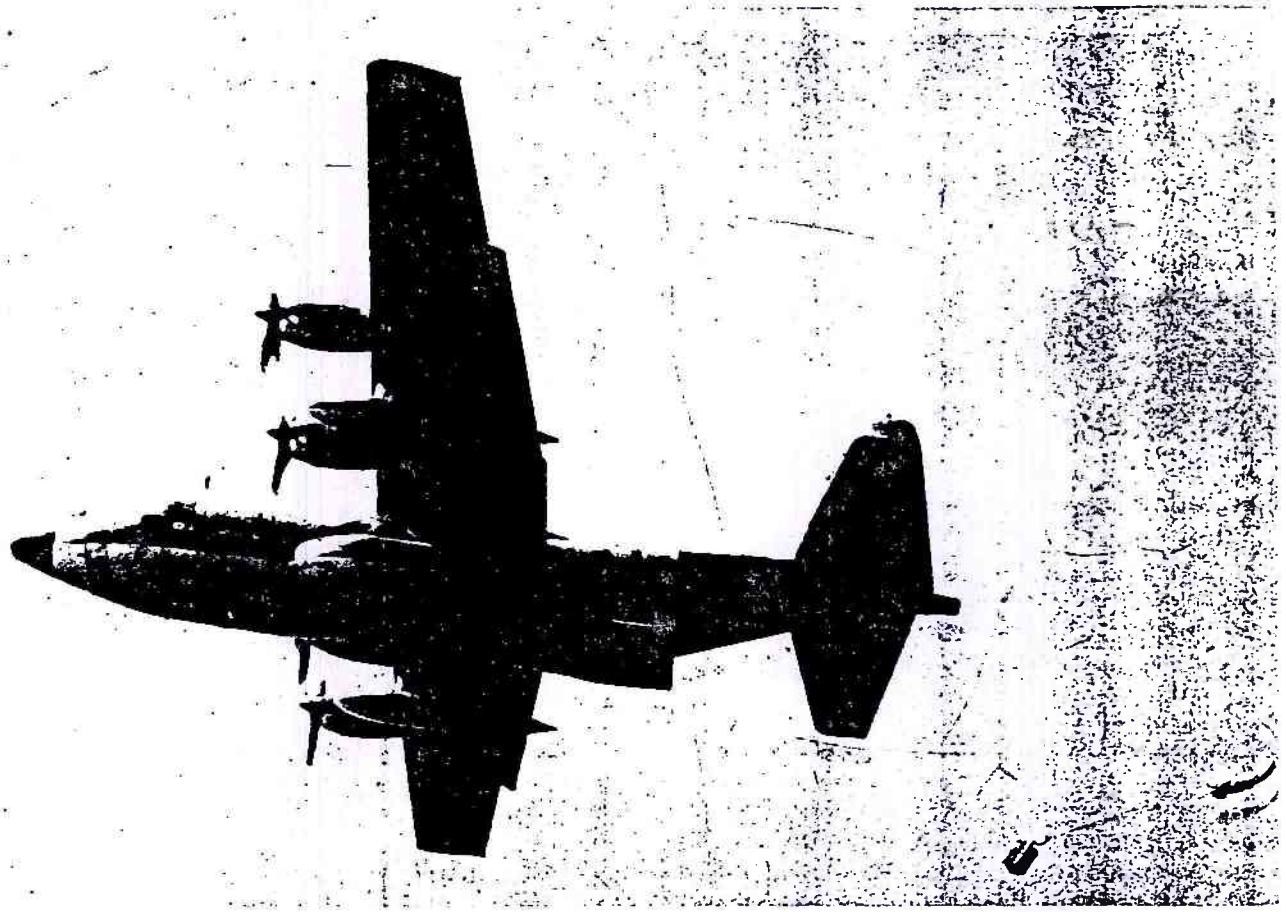
The gun has had a revival and there will be further consideration of the fitting policy. The reports of naval bombardment formed a substantial part of early accounts of Falklands operations and the effectiveness of air fire support will have to be carefully analysed. Many navies will be looking over the shoulders of RN Gunnery Officers as they work out their recommendations for the future.

Public information

At the time of writing the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in the British Parliament are disputing over the form of the Governmental Inquiry which has been promised to examine the origins of what is now known as the Falklands crisis. As early as 5 April the House of Commons Select Committee on Defence announced its intention of conducting an inquiry concerning the state of readiness of Her Majesty's Forces in relation to the situation in the Falkland Islands and the dispositons which were made in the period up to April 1982. The Committee later notified the Secretary of State for Defence, the Rt Hon John Nott MP, about the defence aspects of the Falkland Islands conflict which they would wish to explore once the immediate operations had been concluded. On 9 June the Committee confirmed their intention to give close attention, among the several subjects for consideration, to the handling by the Ministry of Defence of public and press information about the conflict. This is a many-sided subject which broadens into a significant, and often neglected element of national security planning and international relations, the recognition of information services as an arm of Government.

The Falklands Expedition has provided the first opportunity for the British people to experience in their own homes the full blast of war reporting about our Forces by all arms of the so-called Media. It is significant that the Falklands Task Force has been often described as the largest assembly of British naval forces since Suez. The notoriety of the political disaster with which our forces were associated in 1956 has seemingly left memories green, whereas the success of the Commonwealth resistance to Indonesian aggression against Malaysia in 1964–66 is forgotten. Yet the Naval assembly in and around Singapore and the coasts of East and West Malaysia at that time was significantly larger than those in the South Atlantic. The land and air forces actively involved were considerably greater in the Far East.[8]

Technical difficulties made it generally impossible for film reports from British correspondents to reach viewers in the UK. Similarly, pressure on communication channels dictated that reports from the Task Group were in some respects less informative than reports emanating from Buenos Aires. This is not to say that the latter were more accurate. The result of the physical limitations on the flow of information from the British Force was an unsatisfactory degree of dependence upon other sources. This handicap aggravated the difficulties of casualty reporting with the maximum speed and accuracy, to spare the feelings of families and friends. In former times with the exception of HMS *Ark Royal*, which was repeatedly sunk by German propaganda in the early days of



An RAF Hercules carries out an air drop of supplies to a ship in the Task Force in the South Atlantic. (*MOD*)

World War II, security of information about ship or troop movements gave little scope for identifying individual units involved in actions reported from friendly, neutral or enemy sources. The particular circumstances of the South Atlantic operations and the lack of general censorship meant that the families of men in ships or army units could very easily associate them with incidents reported by Argentine or US sources. Lack of material in the form of first-hand reports from British Forces led to accusations that television and radio news and current affairs programmes have had an unpatriotic bias and have encouraged speculation about future operations.

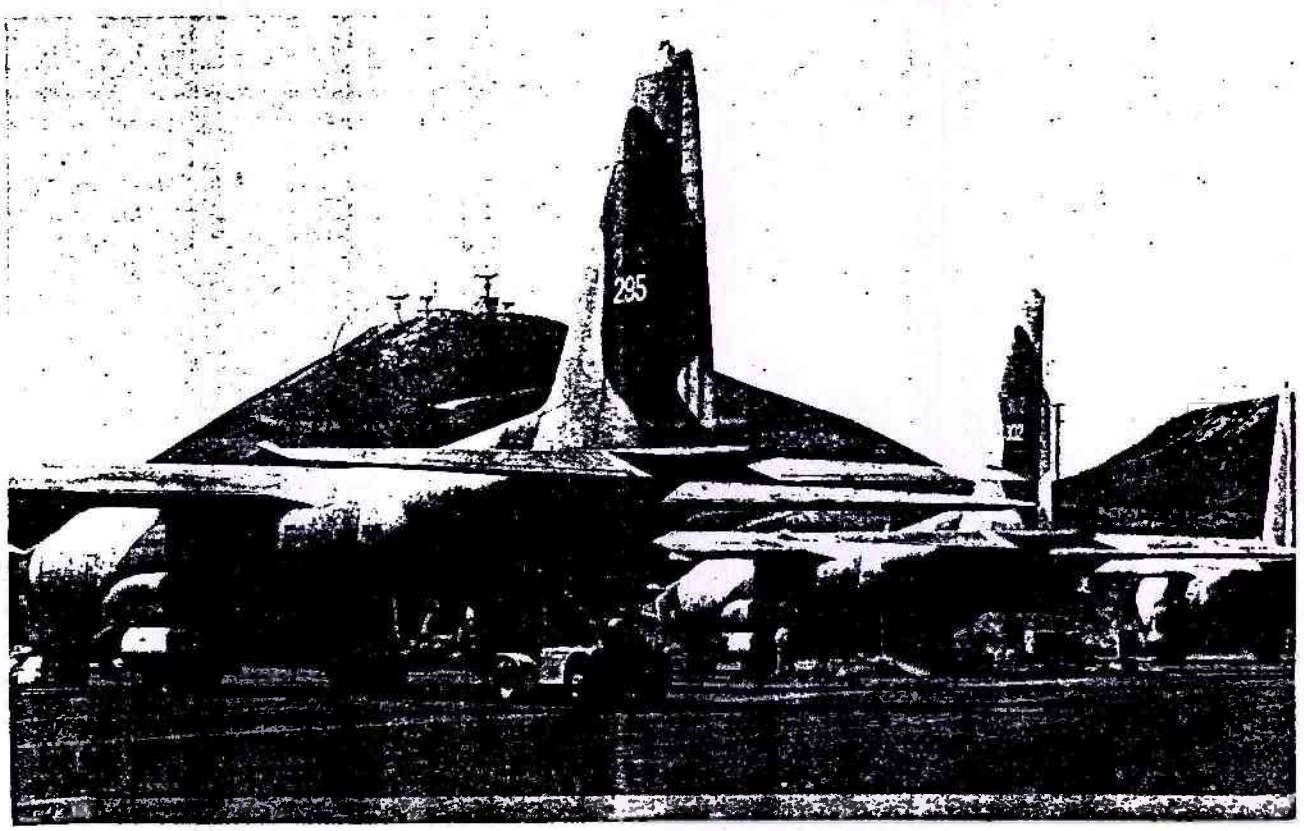
These and other matters are likely to be investigated by the Defence Select Committee. They will also be concerned with the impact on World opinion of the news of events such as the sinking of the Argentine cruiser *General Belgrano* by torpedoes fired by a British submarine and the loss of the Type 42 Destroyer HMS *Sheffield*, after a hit by an Exocet missile.

Opinion was shocked by the number of casualties in the Cruiser's Company although the earlier figures quoted were exaggerated. The loss of HMS *Sheffield* and more than 20 of her crew came as a great shock to the British people. This is an interesting comment on the relative security which we have enjoyed in the past ten years, with the tragic exception of events in Northern Ireland. Other losses followed, each with their toll of casualties, but it was *Sheffield* which brought home to the British people the reality of naval warfare in the missile age.

Air power

It has long been a precept of Joint Warfare that landing operations in daylight in the face of an air threat represent a serious risk. Every endeavour must be made to create a favourable air situation. The handful of Sea Harriers and Harrier GRs performed prodigies in defending the Force against air attack. In their absence the heaviest casualties were sustained when the LSLs *Sir Tristram* and *Sir Galahad* were successfully attacked. It is a credit to them and the naval escort that, apart from these two landing ships and the *Atlantic Conveyor*, damage and casualties were sustained by HM Ships and not by those they were charged to defend.

The absence of Airborne Early Warning (AEW) created major difficulties for the Force but this manifest deficiency hardly counts as a lesson. It can be argued that if the Royal Navy had given its whole-hearted support to the development of Short Take Off and Vertical Landing (STOVL) in the 1960s it could have had developed Harriers years ago instead of leaving this to the US Marine Corps. It seems unlikely that in the process the Fleet Air Arm would have failed to create a replacement for the Gannet. At the same time proper recognition of the new concept of air power at sea would have provided the drive necessary to produce small carriers. Had this been the case the Fleet would have possessed a group of light STOVL carriers instead of relying on two without the possibility of rotation, relief or replacement as was necessary in the



RAF Hercules transport aircraft unload cargo on Wideawake Airfield, Ascension Island. (*MOD*)

South Atlantic. It must have been a close-run thing. It is remarkable that circumstances, good luck and good management have enabled the Force to maintain two carriers on station for the time required to achieve its objectives. It is to be hoped that the realisation of how much has depended upon HM ships *Hermes* and *Invincible* will have had its impact in high places. This realisation should lead to acceptance of the fact that two ships of specialist characteristics do not constitute a capability which can be relied upon at all times. The original concept of STOVL carriers in the 1960s envisaged a group of (say) six ships at about the cost of two of the proposed new carriers designated CVAO1 and O2. Obviously the larger number of hulls would draw the string from the "eggs in one basket" argument about large carrier vulnerability.

In the light of the damage caused by the limited capabilities of the Argentine Air Force in the geographic circumstances of the Falklands campaign, the US Navy may have to think hard about its concept of strike carrier operations and its implications for the construction programme. One wonders if the experience of Kamikaze attack can be applied to defence against missiles. Reports of the firepower developed by the limited resources of the Task Force suggested a soft echo of Pacific days off Okinawa. Judgments about the relative success of aircraft, guns, missiles and small arms fire in repelling and destroying enemy aircraft must await full assessments. It was significant that rapid fire weapons of various calibres were called into use.

Helicopters have played a very important role in antisubmarine warfare and in troop lift, reconnaissance, casualty evacuation and command communications. By all accounts the courage and endurance of their pilots has only been matched by that of their Harrier counterparts. All these highly trained and now battle experienced pilots can advise on airspace management problems, air/ground liaison and the duties of Forward Air Controllers.

Newspaper reports have begun to reveal the part played by Ascension Island and the United States Wideawake airfield. It is apparent that a monumental task has been accomplished, with fixed wing and helicopter movements exceeding traffic at the world's busiest airports. One of the striking features of the Falklands operations has been the extremely rapid improvement in the capability of the Royal Air Force for in-flight refuelling. It has been well understood that greater tanker resources were needed but the notable achievement has been the creation of capability in Nimrod and Hercules not previously fitted to receive fuel in flight. Some of the latter aircraft may have had a tanker conversion. The peculiar geographical circumstances of the Falklands operation have provided impressive illustrations of the merits of modern airships. Their capability for reconnaissance, surveillance and, most significantly for AEW commend them for further active consideration, as do their possibilities in anti-submarine warfare and mine-countermeasures.

Landing forces

As the core units of the landing force were made known it was evident that the First XI was being fielded. It is not immodest to say that three Royal

Marines Commandos, two battalions of the Parachute Regiment and a battalion each of Scots Guards, Welsh Guards and Gurkhas represent the very best infantry striking force that the world's armies could produce. Their performance has served to enhance their reputation and the speed with which they achieved their objectives in very adverse conditions of weather and terrain has been an example of mobile forces in action. It is fortunate that some Royal Marines units were particularly well-equipped to cope with the weather and terrain. Many lessons will be forthcoming. It is better to round off with a reminder of the work which will have been done by the Royal Artillery units, the Royal Engineers and the Royal Corps of Transport. Each will have a record to be proud of. Mention has already been made of those who care for men and for machines. Many soldiers and sailors have come to be grateful for the help they have received from doctors and nursing staff. The Force will have been grateful to those who have kept their machines and equipment in fighting order. Finally, as one who has been so much concerned with landing operations the writer of this article has been much impressed by the way the landing force was put ashore in San Carlos Bay. The organisation needed to achieve this is an unsung saga of staff-work based on many years experience. It is fortunate that cuts in our capabilities have not allowed this essential expertise to wither.

Retrospect

In conclusion, it can be said that at the beginning of April 1982 the Government of the United Kingdom found itself in a politico-strategic nightmare with the most alarming diplomatic, tactical and logistical features. The military solution, if it can be labelled with such an easy-sounding word, was to deploy land forces over 8,000 miles into the approaching Antarctic winter. Their task would be to confront and if, necessary, eject a well-equipped garrison likely to exceed their own numbers in the face of a serious threat from land-based airpower and a by no means negligible air, surface and sub-surface threat at sea. The risks to the safety and well-being of the civilian population were alarmingly apparent, but one must not prejudge the conclusions of any Inquiry into the Falklands crisis.

There are two general lessons to be absorbed from the experience of these past weeks. First, when cuts are made in force levels and equipment programmes Ministers must be made aware of the capability they are surrendering and the consequent loss of options in the employment of military forces as a means of maintaining freedom of political action. Comfortable words like "red carpet treatment" or "by invitation only" or "the oil will always flow" are all very well as artificial assumptions to blur the consequences of cuts in capability or deployment. They seldom live up to expectations in the harsh realities of the modern world. The second lesson is summed up in the old adage, "Do not put off until tomorrow what ought to be done today". It is far easier and less costly in life and treasure to deter aggression than it is to wrest from an aggressor the fruits of his aggression.

1 *The Mariner's Mirror* (Journal of the Society for Nautical Research) 67 (2) May 1981, 124. Curiously enough these were ordered by a Colonel Vetch of Boston, Mass., for a seaborne attack on Quebec.

2 Cmd 8288 June 1981 (HM Stationery Office) p. 31.

3 So described at the time by the writer of this article and others. The designated hospital ship, for example, was off the Cape of Good Hope.

4 The Statements on the Defence Estimates 1981 and 1982. Cmd 8212 paragraph 416 and Cmd 8529 paragraph 238 respectively.

5 Ibid. 1982, p. 17.

6 Conway Press, Greenwich, 1979.

7 The final figure quoted by Argentina was 350. Even this much reduced figure was surprising considering that two modern escorts were in company. There was considerable confusion in the reports about the sinking and it seemed that the UK forfeited some international sympathy, which the almost bloodless liberation of South Georgia (one Argentine killed) had left intact or reinforced.

8 The Far East Fleet consisted of two strike carriers, sometimes reinforced to a total of four including HMH *Melbourne*, a Commando Ship (LPH), an assault ship (LP) and a wide sweep of destroyers, frigates and submarines, including ships from the RAN and RNZN. The Inshore Flotilla alone mustered 25 ships, the majority MCM (V) of the Ton class and Seaward Defence Boats. The land forces deployed in Malaysia were considerably in excess of the two Brigade Groups in the Falklands. Land-based air power was readily available in the Malaysian situation but in the South Atlantic the great distances and lack of diversion air fields made the deployment of shore-based aircraft extremely difficult. The logistic support of the Falklands, involved a supply line 8,000 miles long, with only an air staging post on Ascension Island and anchorages in South Georgia, by contrast with the chain of support facilities along the old imperial route to the Far East which existed in the 1960s.

Ships in the Falkland Islands Task Force

Senior Commanders

Chief of the Defence Staff, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Terence Lewin, GCB, MVO, DSC.
First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Henry Leach, GCB, ADC.
Commander-in-Chief, Fleet, Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse, KCB.
Flag Officer, First Flotilla, Rear Admiral John Woodward.
Commodore of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Captain S. C. Dunlop.

Warships

Aircraft Carriers		
Hermes[b]	28,700 tons	2 Quad Seacat SAM launchers (GWS.22)
	1,350 crew	10 Harriers
	28 knots	18 Sea King
Invincible[b]	19,810 tons	2 Sea Dart SAM launchers
	1,000 crew	6 Harriers
	28 knots	15 Sea King
Destroyers and Frigates		
Bristol	7,100 tons	2 Sea Dart SAM launchers
(Type 82)	407 crew	1 Ikara ASW launcher
	29 knots	1 4·5 in. Gun + 2 20 mm Cannons
		Facility for a Wasp helicopter
Antrim	6,200 tons	4 MM.38 Exocet SSM
Glamorgan	471 crew	2 Seaslug Mk. 2 SAM launchers
(County class)	30 knots	2 Quad Seacat SAM launchers (GWS.22)
		2 4·5 in. Guns
		1 Wessex HAS.3 ASW helicopter
Cardiff	4,100 tons	2 Sea Dart SAM launchers
Coventry (sunk)	268 crew	6 Mark 32 ASW Torpedo tubes
Exeter	29 knots	1 4·5 in. Gun + 2 20 mm Cannons
Glasgow		1 Sea Lynx HAS.2 ASW helicopter
Sheffield (sunk)		
(Type 42)		
Brilliant	4,000 tons	12 Sea Wolf SAM launchers
Broadsword	223 crew	4 MM.38 Exocet SSM
Battleaxe[a]	30 knots	6 Mark 32 ASW Torpedo tubes
(Type 22)		2 40 mm Guns
		2 Sea Lynx HAS.2 ASW helicopters
Active	3,250 tons	4 MM.38 Exocet SSM
Alacrity	235 crew	1 4·5 in. Gun + 2 20 mm Cannons
Ambuscade[a]	30 knots	1 Quad Seacat SAM launcher (GWS.24)
Antelope (sunk)		6 Mark 32 ASW Torpedo tubes
Ardent (sunk)		1 Sea Lynx HAS.2 ASW helicopter
Arrow		
Avenger[a]		
(Type 21)		
Argonaut	3,200 tons	4 MM.38 Exocet SSM
Penelope[a]	223 crew	3 Quad Seacat SAM launchers (GWS.22)
Minerva[a]	28 knots	6 Mark 32 ASW Torpedo tubes
(Leander class—Exocet Group)		2 40 mm Guns
		1 Wasp (or Sea Lynx HAS.2) ASW helicopter
Ariadne[a]	2,962 tons	1 Quad Seacat SAM launcher (GWS.22)
Bacchante[a]	260 crew	2 4·5 in. Guns + 2 20 mm Cannon
(Leander class—Broad-beamed Group)	28 knots	1 Limbo depth-charge mortar
		1 Wasp (or Sea Lynx HAS.2)ASW helicopter
Andromeda	2,962 tons	12 Sea Wolf SAM launchers
(Oeander class—Broad-beamed	260 crew	4 MM.38 Exocet SSM
converted Group)	28 knots	6 Mark ASW Torpedo tubes
		1 Sea Lynx HAS.2 ASW helicopter
Aurora[a]	2,860 tons	1 Ikara ASW launcher
Euryalus[a]	257 crew	2 Quad Seacat SAM launchers (GWS.22)
Dido[a]	28 knots	1 Limbo depth-charge mortar
(Leander class—Ikara Group)		2 40 mm Guns
		1 Wasp
Yarmouth	2,800 tons	1 Quad Seacat SAM launcher (GWS.20)
Plymouth	235 crew	2 4·5 in. Guns
(Rothesay class)	30 knots	1 Limbo depth-charge mortar
		1 Wasp ASW helicopter

Submarines[c]

Splendid (Swiftsure class)	4,500 tons 97 crew +30 knots	5 21 in. Torpedo tubes with 25 Mark 24 Modified Tigerfish torpedoes
Conqueror (Churchill & Valiant class)	4,900 tons 103 crew +30 knots	6 21 in. Torpedo tubes with 32 Mark 24 Modified Tigerfish torpedoes
(Oberon & Porpoise class)	2,410 tons 69 crew 12 (17 dived) knots	8 21 in. Torpedo tubes (6 bow, 2 aft) 24 Mark 24 Modified Tigerfish torpedoes

Amphibious Warfare Vessels

Landing Platform Dock (LPD) Fearless Intrepid	12,120 tons 580 crew 21 knots	4 Quad Seacat SAM launchers (GWS.20) 2 40 mm Guns 4 Landing Craft Mechanised (LCM) (100 ton load each) 4 Landing Craft Vehicle & Personnel (LCVP) (5 ton load each) Facility for 5 Wessex or 4 Sea King helicopters Accommodates 400 troops for extended period or 700 troops for short-time
Landing Ship Logistic (LSL) Sir Bedivere Sir Galahad (sunk) Sir Geraint Sir Percivale Sir Tristram	5,674 tons 68 crew 17 knots	2 40 mm Guns (possibly fitted) Facility for helicopter operations Accommodates 340 troops for extended period or 534 for a short-time. (These ships are RFA manned)

Troop Transports and Equipment Ferries

QEII	67,000 tons	Req Cunard Liner. Facilities for helicopter operations
Canberra	44,807	Req P&O Liner. Facilities for helicopter operations
Norland	12,000	Req P&O Ro-Ro ferry
Tor Caledonia	10,000	Req Whitwill Ro-Ro ferry
St. Edmunds	9,000	Req Sealink Ro-Ro ferry
Rangatira	8,990	Req Passtruct Ro-Ro ferry
Nordic Ferry	6,500	Reg Townsend Thoresen Ro-Ro ferry
Baltic Ferry	6,500	Req Townsend Thoresen Ro-Ro ferry
Elk	5,463	Req P&O Ro-Ro ferry: 2 40 mm Guns.
Europic	4,190	Req Townsend Thoresen Ro-Ro ferry
Atlantic Conveyor (sunk)	14,946	Req Cunard Container Ship converted to aircraft ferry
Atlantic Causeway	14,946	Req Cunard Container Ship converted to aircraft ferry
Contender Bezant	11,000	Req Sea Containers Ltd container ship

Supply Ships

Fort Austin[d] Fort Grange	23,600 tons 185 crew 22 knots	RFA Fleet replenishment ship. Facility for 4 Sea King helicopters
Resource Regent	22,890 tons 171 crew 21 knots	RFA Fleet replenishment ship. Facility for 4 Sea King helicopters
Stormness	16,792 tons	RFA Stores support ship
Finnanger	6,061	Char Norwegian freighter
Saxonia	8,000	Req Cunard freighter
Lycanon	11,804	Char China Mutual Steamship freighter
Geestport	9,750	Char freighter

Support Ships

Uganda	16,907 tons	Req P&O Liner. Converted into a hospital ship
Hydra	2,744	RFA Casualty ferry
Hecate	2,744	RFA Casualty ferry
Hecla	2,744	RFA Casualty ferry
British Enterprise III	1,600	Req BUE North Sea oil-rig support ship (manned-submersible support)
Stena Seaspread	6,061	Req Stena North Sea oil-rig support ship

Stena Prospector	7,000 tons	Req Stena North Sea oil-rig support ship
Engadine	9,000	RFA Helicopter support ship
Pict	1,478	Req United Trawlers. Minesweeper tender
Cordella	1,238	Req J. Marr trawler. Minesweeper
Farnella	1,207	Req J. Marr trawler. Minesweeper
Junella	1,615	Req J. Marr trawler. Minesweeper
Northella	1,238	Req J. Marr trawler. Minesweeper
Salvagman	1,568	Req United Towing ocean tug (20,000 hp)
Yorkshireman	689	Req United Towing ocean tug (9,000 hp)
Irishman	689	Req United Towing ocean tug (9,000 hp)
Wimpey Seahorse	1,599	Req Wimpey Marine ocean tug
Endurance	3,600	Ice patrol ship. 2 20 mm Cannon. 2 Wasp ASW helicopters
St. Helena	3,150	Req United International Bank Ltd islands supply ship
Iris	3,873	Char British Telecom cable ship

Tankers

Bayleaf	40,000 tons	RFA tanker
Scottish Eagle	33,000	Char King Line tanker
Alvega	33,000	Char Finance for Shipping Ltd. tanker
Balder London	33,000	Char Lloyds of London tanker
Olmeda	36,000	RFA tanker
Olwen	36,000	RFA tanker
Olna	36,000	RFA tanker
Tidespring	27,400	RFA tanker
Tidepool	27,400	RFA tanker
Pearleaf	25,790	RFA tanker
Bayleaf	20,320	RFA tanker
Fort Toronto	19,982	Char Canadian Pacific water tanker
Eburna	19,763	Char Shell tanker
G. A. Walker	18,744	Char Canadian Pacific tanker
Dart	15,650	Char BP tanker
Test	15,653	Char BP tanker
Tay	15,650	Char BP tanker
Trent	15,649	Char BP tanker
Wye	15,649	Char BP tanker
Esk	15,643	Char BP tanker
Tamar	15,642	Char BP tanker
Avon	15,640	Char BP tanker
Anco Charger	15,974	Char P&O tanker
Luminetta	14,925	Char Cunard tanker
Ivy	13,271	Char BP tanker
Fern	13,252	Char BP tanker
Fawley	11,064	Char Esso tanker
Blue Rover	11,522	RFA tanker
Grey Rover	11,522	RFA tanker
Cortina	6,499	Char Swedish tanker
Corona	4,899	Char Swedish tanker
Orionman	3,623	Char tanker
Vinga Polaris	?	Char tanker

Notes:

a The presence of these vessels with the Task Force is still unconfirmed.

b The numbers for aircraft are those that were onboard the aircraft carriers at the beginning of hostilities. Losses and operational necessity would have altered these numbers considerably.

c Only two submarines are known to have been present in the South Atlantic.

d Ship flying the board-pendant of the Commodore of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

ASW Anti-Submarine Warfare
Char Chartered
GWS Guided Weapons System
Req Requisitioned
RFA Royal Fleet Auxiliary
Ro-Ro Roll-on, Roll-off
SAM Surface to Air Missile
SSM Surface to Surface Missile

This list is compiled from unclassified sources.

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The Falkland Islands/ Islas Malvinas conflict

A question of zones

R.P. Barston and P.W. Birnie

> 'Those unfortunate islands ... scene of feud and assassination ... a cause of angry discussion among nations.'
>
> Extract from *A Narrative Voyages of HMS Beagle* by Robert Fitzroy, 1st March 1833, Folio Society London UK, 1977, Chapter 5.

The authors review legal aspects of the UK zones around the Falkland Islands during the conflict with Argentina. A background to the crisis is presented and the zonal concept in international law is examined. The various UK zones are described, particular attention being paid to the sinking of the *General Belgrano* outside the zone then in effect. The authors conclude by relating the UK use of zones to the international law of self-defence.

Keywords: Naval engineering; UK; Argentina

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The Falklands crisis, for such a comparatively short five [illegible] was remarkable for the number of issues of law, politics, economics and military power that it raised, many of them with a marked [illegible]. In this article, we concentrate particularly on the aspect of the maritime zones involved during the conflict, many features of which raise questions which are as yet unsettled in international law and which could pose policy problems in any similar disputes in the future. Even if the Falkland Islands dispute itself cannot be regarded as finally resolved while there has not been resumption of normal diplomatic relations or the ending of all military activities arising from the dispute.

Many of the maritime issues have aroused considerable controversy: for example, the assertion by the UK of the Maritime Exclusion Zone (MEZ) and the sinking of the Argentinian warship, the *General Belgrano*. In this preliminary analysis we review legal questions raised by these issues, leaving aside for the moment those connected with the enhanced range of weapons systems and their challenge to traditional concepts of power at sea and on land, as well as the relationship of the dispute to Antarctica.

Background to the crisis

The Falkland Islands[1] were discovered during the sea voyages of the merchant adventurers, probably in the 16th century. The UK's first settlement on West Falkland in 1765 was supported by a naval frigate commanded by Commodore [illegible] under orders from [illegible] to take possession of the islands, but it was temporarily deserted in 1774 because the support vessel had to return to Britain following naval [illegible] there. When Britain resumed its settlement on the islands in 1833 officers

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from HMS *Tyne* and HMS *Clio* rehoisted the British flag on West Falkland. Following this, British possession of the islands continued uninterrupted, though protested by Argentina, until 1982.

Captain Cook took formal possessionof South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands in 1775. South Georgia became a centre for whaling and sealing from the 19th century, although the UK had abandoned whaling by 1965. Both the South Sandwich Islands and South Georgia were formally annexed by the UK in 1908, as was Grahamland in Antarctica. The first Argentinian claim to South Georgia dates from 1927 and to the South Sandwich Islands from 1948. In 1917 the UK also annexed a sector of the Antarctic continent to the South Pole as UK territory, overlapping to some extent the similar sector claims of both Argentina and Chile. In 1962 the UK designated its Antarctica territory as a colony.[2]

In the early 1960s, the Argentinian government decided to pursue its claim to the Falkland Islands through the UN, which led in December 1965 to the adoption of Resolution 2065 inviting Argentina and the UK to find a peaceful solution to the problem by negotiation. Talks held in 1970 and 1971 led to a communications agreement to provide sea and air transport and to increasing trade between Argentina and the Islands. Despite the improvements facilitated by the agreement Anglo–Argentine relations began to deteriorate from 1975 onwards, following the UK vessel *Shackleton's* voyage of scientific exploration and investigation of the waters of the continental shelf of the Falkland Islands in 1975.

In 1968, the UK had stated that it would consider transfer of sovereignty to Argentina 'first, only as part of an agreement which would secure a permanently satisfactory relationship between the Islands and Argentina and second, only if it were clear to Her Majesty's Government that the islanders themselves regarded such an agreement as satisfactory to their interests'.[3] The Argentinians appeared to regard the *Shackleton* expedition as an indicator that the UK government would never relinquish sovereignty over the islands. An Argentinian destroyer, *Almirante Storm*, subsequently fired a shot across the bows of the *Shackleton* some 80 miles south of the Falklands on 4 February 1976, and attempted to arrest it. Later that year, in December 1976, 50 Argentinian scientists landed on an uninhabited island in the South Thule group, in the South Sandwich Islands, 1200 miles from the Falkland Islands. Although the landing was soon discovered and periodically protested by the UK, it was difficult for the UK to take any practical steps to remove the scientists.

However, further talks took place between 1977 and 1981. Against the background of yet more inconclusive talks and the announcement by the UK in April 1981 that it would be withdrawing HMS *Endurance* (the ship patrolling the area) in February 1982, a group of workmen employed by an Argentinian scrap merchant, Constantino Davidoff, were landed at the Christian Salvesen Company's former whaling station at Leith in South Georgia by an Argentinian naval transport. They landed without permits though legally contracted to dismantle the buildings. The group hoisted the Argentinian flag and were subsequently provisioned by an Argentinian Antarctic supply vessel. The Argentinian Foreign Minister asserted that this group on South Georgia was on Argentinian territory and would be protected by Argentina.

On 2 April 1982, Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands. On 3 April, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 502 which demanded an immediate withdrawal of all Argentinian forces from the Falkland Islands

[2] The background to the Falklands crisis is discussed in J. Metford, 'Falklands or Malvinas? The background to the dispute', *International Affairs*, Vol 44, 1968, pp 463–481; and *The Falkland Islands Dispute: International Dimensions*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1982.
[3] UN, 401 (1962).
[4] HC Deb, Vol 781, Col 1463–4, 1967–8.

(Islas Malvinas), and an immediate cessation of hostilities, by a vote of 10 in favour (France, Guyana, Ireland, Japan, Jordon, Togo, Uganda, the UK, the USA, Zaire) to 1 against (Panama), with four abstentions (China, Poland, Spain, the USSR). Resolution 502 called, thirdly, on the governments of Argentina and the UK 'to seek a diplomatic solution to their differences and to respect fully the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations'.

Maritime jurisdiction

In recent years the law of the sea has been developing increasingly on the basis of a zonal approach to jurisdiction. When the Falkland Islands disputes occurred in the 18th and 19th centuries there were only two jurisdictional areas: a narrow territorial sea, in which the coastal state exercised full sovereignty, apart from innocent passage, and the high seas, in which the doctrine of freedom of the seas prevailed.

After the second world war, however, states began to claim more extensive rights for economic and security reasons. Various new jurisdictional areas began to emerge. First, in 1945 the USA in the Truman Proclamation asserted sovereign rights over its continental shelf for the purpose of exploring and exploiting its natural resources. In July 1947, Chile became the first country to claim a 200-mile zone, proclaiming sovereignty over both the continental shelf and the seas above the shelf to a distance of 200 miles, followed by Peru in August 1947. These states joined with Ecuador in 1952 to modify the concept into a maritime zone, based on geographical and biological factors, in which they would exercise sole jurisdiction and sovereignty over the sea floor and the sea adjacent to their coast. The maritime zone[4] could also be extended round islands forming part of the territory of the declarant states.

At the First United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS I) in 1958, the continental shelf doctrine was approved and developed in the Geneva Continental Shelf Convention, which defined the shelf for legal purposes as including submarine areas adjacent to the coast but outside the territorial sea to a depth of 200 metres or beyond that limit to where the depth of the waters permits exploitation of its natural resources. The definition included the seabed and subsoil of islands, which could therefore have their own continental shelf. UNCLOS I did not approve the concept of a 200-mile maritime zone, however, and it was not accepted into customary international law. What UNCLOS I did accept was a much more limited zone – the contiguous zone of 12 miles within which states could exercise a functional control over customs and similar matters.

Neither UNCLOS I nor UNCLOS II in 1960 fixed any limit for the territorial sea with the result that states increasingly began to claim wider territorial seas and to develop the zonal approach to jurisdiction. The Canadian Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act of 1970[5] was important in this respect. The Act was designed to deal with pollution threats to ice-covered areas, over which international law was considered inadequate, by extending Canadian jurisdiction to 100 nautical miles off the coastline. Rather than being an extension of sovereignty, the framework of the Canadian legislation was more a development of the contiguous zone concept of limited functional jurisdiction out to a specified maritime distance, based on the coastal state's right to protect its maritime environment. By 1972, just before UNCLOS III, however, 11 states had made

[4] See *Declaration on the Maritime Zone 18 August 1952*, in Lay *et al*, eds, *New Directions in the Law of the Sea Documents*, Vol I, Oceana, New York, NY, 1973, pp 231–232.
[5] *International Legal Materials*, Vol 9, 1970, p 543.

200-mile claims; 6 of the 11 were resource zone claims including fish and seabed resources rather than classical territorial sea zones. In addition, one state (Costa Rica) had claimed a 200-mile fishery conservation zone, eight states had made claims to exclusive fishing zones (FZ) or territorial seas from 12 to 200 miles and six states had claimed fishery conservation zones of 100 miles.[6]

By the time UNCLOS III had begun its substantive negotiations for a new convention in 1974, there was much greater support for 200-mile zones in the form of exclusive economic zones (EEZs) as proposed by African states and others. The series of negotiating texts produced by UNCLOS III from 1975–82 all included articles defining the rights, duties and jurisdictions of coastal states in such zones. In the Convention (Article 56)[7] the coastal state is given sovereign rights over the exploration and exploitation of all resources in the sea and seabed, and over other economic activities, such as the production of energy from, for example, sea water. It is also given jurisdiction of differing degrees over artificial islands and other structures, marine scientific research, and marine environmental protection among others.

Other extensions of coastal-state jurisdiction in the new Law of the Sea (LOS) Convention included fixing the breadth of the territorial sea at a maximum of 12 miles[8] and the contiguous zone at 24 miles.[9] A new definition of the continental shelf in Article 76 of the Convention further extends coastal-state jurisdiction over submarine areas. Two kinds of shelf are now provided for: the first is based on a distance limit of 200 miles (as in the EEZ definition), regardless of the existence of a geological shelf; the second defines the shelf in terms of the natural prolongation of the land territory to the outer edge of the continental margin. The Convention lays down various complex criteria for establishing this outer limit, which is not in any event to exceed either 350 miles from the baselines, or 100 miles from the 2500m isobath.

The Convention also provides for coastal states to exercise special jurisdictional rights in particular geographical or other circumstances. For example, it deals with the rights of states bordering straits and archipelagic states to regulate passage, designation of special areas, including ice-covered areas for the purpose of preventing vessel source pollution, and the right of coastal states to regulate passage through their territorial sea. It also allows continental shelf states 500m safety zones round installations on their shelves and transit states (with which landlocked states have established transit rights to reach the sea) to provide free zones or other customs facilities at the ports of entry or exit.

Security zones

Although the Convention develops international law in a number of ways on these issues by providing for extensions of jurisdiction over various areas and activities, and notably extends the idea of designating zones to facilitate some of these purposes, the Convention does not provide for security zones. Indeed, one of its remarkable features is how little specific reference is made to the military uses of the sea. The result is that although jurisdictional area limits are set for other zones, the legality, jurisdictional content and breadth of security zones is not addressed by any of the Law of the Sea Conventions.

Article 88 does provide that 'the high seas shall be used for peaceful purposes' but as no definition of 'peaceful' is given the term does not

[6] See E.D. Brown, 'Maritime zones: a survey of claims', in Churchill *et al* (eds), *New Directions in the Law of the Sea*, Vol III, Oceana Publications Inc, New York, NY, 1973.
[7] 'Draft Convention of The Law of the Sea, A/CONF. 62/L.78, 28 August 1981.
[8] Ibid, Article 3.
[9] Ibid, Article 33.

exclude such military uses as are not aggressive. The provisions relating to innocent passage (Article 19(2)) which apply to all ships (warships and merchant ships) extend the limited Geneva regime to include a list of activities which render passage non-innocent – enabling the coastal states 'to take the necessary steps' to prevent such passages,[10] including: any threat or use of force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of the coastal state or contrary to the principles of the UN Charter; any exercise or practice with weapons of any kind; and the launching, landing or taking on board of any aircraft or military devices.

The zones permitted in the Convention are all within areas over which the coastal state either has sovereignty, sovereign rights or jurisdiction under the Convention. The Convention does not provide for the establishment of any zones on the high seas. There are, however, several examples in state practice of *ad hoc* zones being established (or declared) by some states on the high seas though limited in area and for specific purposes. At first sight, this might seem to be contrary to the established doctrine of the freedom of the seas.

The high seas under both the Geneva High Seas and the new LOS Convention are open to all states and on them all states can exercise the freedom of the high seas, which includes freedom of navigation *inter alia* (Article 87). The Geneva Convention listed four freedoms but added that there were 'others which are recognized by the general principles of international law'; it requires that all are exercised by all states with 'reasonable regard to the interests of other states in their exercise of the freedom of the high seas' (Article 2). The latter's provision is similar but slightly different: it lists six freedoms, '*inter alia*' (ie implying that there are others) and requires that all be exercised 'with due regard' both for the interests of other states exercising their freedoms and 'with due regard' for the rights under this Convention with respect to the Area (ie the seabed Area beyond national jurisdiction for which the Convention establishes an international regime and Authority).

Thus neither Convention rules out the possibility of the seas being used for other purposes under the doctrine of freedom as long as these uses do not unreasonably impede the exercise of these freedoms and the uses are recognized in international law.

Closure of sea areas

States have in practice made use of the seas for a number of other purposes.[11] For example, at the national level states have closed sea areas to conduct weapons tests or carry out naval manoeuvres. For such purposes it is state practice temporarily to close areas of the sea to all other ships and aircraft; as long as there is wide acceptance of the use and the reasonableness of its exercise such temporary closures of sea areas have not generally been widely protested, though nuclear weapons testing has led a number of states to object because of the harmful effects of radioactive fall-out.[12]

Sea areas have been closed on international authority in rare circumstances. For example, during the Rhodesian dispute, the Security Council exercised its power under Article 42 to take action to restore peace by measures including 'blockade and other operations by air, sea or land forces of the United Nations', by authorizing the UK to prevent, by the use of force if necessary, any tankers reaching the Rhodesian terminal at Umtali via Beira and called on all states to divert all of their vessels

[10] In the case of warships as defined by the Convention (Article 29), the coastal state can only 'require' them to leave immediately under Article 30.

[11] The concept of a 'zone' has been used in many different ways. For example, efforts have been made, unsuccessfully, to declare areas of the sea as 'zones of peace', to limit nuclear testing or conventional military activities, such as the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. See, for example, Philip Towle, 'The United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean: blind alley or zone of peace', in eds Larry W. Bowman *et al*, *The Indian Ocean in Global Politics*, Westview Press, Boulder, CO, 1981, ch 11. Other types of zones have included the possibility of a moving operational or war zone around escorted convoys, although this has not been pursued because of practical difficulties. See D.P. O'Connell, *The Influence of Law on Sea Power*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1975, p 168.

[12] See, for example, 'Nuclear tests case: Australia v France', I.C.J. Rep. 1974, p 253; New Zealand v France, *ibid*, p 457; and on British nuclear tests in the Pacific, *Hansard*, HS, Vol 568, Written Answers, Cols 27–29, 2 April 1957.

which might be carrying oil to Rhodesia. Some of the difficulties and possible hazards of this operation such as identifying the nature and final destination of the cargo and getting vessels to submit to search were highlighted in the naval incident involving the French tanker *Artois* on 19 December 1967. The *Artois* had been intercepted in the Mozambique channel by the RN frigate *Minerva*, and despite a warning shot refused to agree to a cargo search. The vessel was allowed to continue its passage only as a result of talks between the UK and French governments to clarify the cargo. Over 50 tankers were stopped and checked by the UK Beira patrol between April 1966 and December 1971.[13]

A large sea area was closed in the Cuban missile crisis, in which the USA enforced a so-called 'quarantine' of Cuba in 1962. Under the relevant proclamation the Secretary of Defense was empowered to prevent the delivery of prohibited material by regulations including the designation, within a reasonable distance of Cuba, of prohibited or restricted zones and of prescribed routes.[14] The term 'quarantine' was thus employed to avoid characterizing the operation as a blockade, which under international law could be used against an enemy in war, but the application of which in peacetime was doubtful following the provisions of Article 2(3) and 37 of the Charter, requiring states to settle disputes by peaceful means. Although the US action is claimed to have been justified on various grounds including collective action under the OAS Rio Treaty, self-defence or maintenance of world peace, many lawyers remain doubtful concerning the validity of the action under international law in the particular circumstances of the crisis, since the right of self-defence exists only in exceptional circumstances.[15]

More relevant to the type of zones asserted during the Falklands conflict are the war zones which have occasionally been declared. These fall into two types. Historically, the more comprehensive type of war zone was the first to be used. During the first world war, Germany, following the confusion engendered by the sinking of the *Lusitania* by a submarine, declared that all merchant vessels would be regarded as warships and sunk on sight, since the UK had been arming (albeit minimally) some merchant ships. Though German policy was modified for a period, the difficulties of identification led Germany in 1917 to declare that submarine warfare would be unrestricted in an announced war zone. However, in 1939 Germany at first adopted a more moderate position (following the terms of the London Protocols of 1936), but soon found it necessary to adopt a war zone into which all ships, including neutrals, entered at their own peril and from 1940–45 waged unrestricted submarine warfare within the zone. The main significance of the zone was its warning to neutrals. At the Nuremberg trials the German admirals were charged *inter alia* with waging unrestricted submarine warfare in breach of the London Protocols by including merchant vessels within the war zone.[16]

The second kind of zone is more like a blockade in that it attempts to limit operations to the territorial sea. It aims also to minimize the effects of belligerency on neutral shipping. Examples of such zones include the zone declared by the Spanish Republicans in 1936; that used during the Vietnam war; those in the Middle Eastern wars 1967–73 and in the 1970–71 Indo–Pakistan war. Attacks outside the zone have given rise to legal arguments about the validity of actions outside the zone. In the 1967 Arab–Israeli war, for example, the *Eilat* was sunk by a styx missile fired off Alexandria. Israel protested that the *Eilat* was on the high seas at the

[illegible] Council Resolution 221, 1966, SCOR [illegible] 1st Year, Resolutions and Decisions, p 5. For details of the *Artois* incident see HC Deb, Vol 756, Cols 1265–7, 1967, 68, and the *Beira* patrol, HC Deb, Vol 821, Cols 704–5, 1971–72.

[14] Proclamation 3504, *AJIL*, Vol 57, p 512.

[15] C H O Christol and C.R. Davis, 'Maritime quarantine, the naval interdiction of offensive weapons and material to Cuba, 1962', *AJIL*, Vol 57, *ibid*, p 525; and Quincy Wright, 'The Cuban quarantine', *ibid*, p 546.

[16] See *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the Military Tribunal*, Nuremberg, 1948, Vol 22, p 558. The German officer responsible for sinking the *Athenia* was acquitted on the grounds of his belief that the ship was a merchant vessel.

time. Again, in the 1967 war Israel felt constrained to pay compensation as a result of the mistaken Israeli attack on the USS *Liberty* on the high seas.

Defensive action outside the territorial sea

Defensive military action has been traditionally guided or influenced by the fact that it must be justified as coming within the definition of self-defence under international law. Article 51 of the UN Charter preserves the 'inherent right of self-defence' despite the Charter's prohibition in Article 2(4) on 'the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purpose of the United Nations'. The Charter adds that the right arises when an armed attack occurs, and can be exercised until the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to maintain the peace. Action in support of self-defence is governed by international legal requirements concerning the nature and immediacy of the attack and the proportionality of the response to the seriousness of the attack.

The contribution of 'operational zones' to the concept of self-defence is claimed to be that they facilitate identification of enemy vessels by assuming that all vessels entering the zone are hostile. This serves to help bridge the gap between hostile intent and hostile act, in that those entering the zone are considered hostile and thus the right of self-defence can be exercised against them as necessary. As Professor O'Connell notes, the 'operational zones, if permitted on the high seas at all in cases of limited war, are permitted only for the purpose of belligerent operations among the protagonists and not for the purpose of molesting neutrals. The problem, of course, is one of positive identification'.[17]

Although in many conflicts there is difficulty in determining whether the original threat or attack was legally sufficient to justify the use of force in self-defence and the actual measures taken, there is no doubt that in the Falkland Islands crisis the UK response to the Argentinian invasion of the Falklands in declaring the maritime exclusion zone, although unusual in some respects compared to previous zones, was justifiable.

Falkland Islands maritime exclusion zone

From 12 April 1982 the UK operated a 200-mile unilateral maritime exclusion zone (MEZ) around the Falklands, in the form of a circle of 200 nautical miles from latitude 51° 40' South and longitude 59° 39' West. The MEZ applied to Argentine warships and naval auxiliaries and it was made clear that other innocent vessels should keep away from the zone in the event of a naval engagement. The title 'maritime exclusion zone', as far as we can ascertain, was new in international law. As in the case of the Cuban 'quarantine' the intention seems to have been to avoid initially the inappropriate use of 'blockade' in the absence of a recognized state of war and also to avoid terminological confusion with the EEZ.

The declaration was not accompanied by an explanation as to why 200 nautical miles had been chosen for the zone. In customary international law the exercise of the right of self-defence is limited only by the nature of the attack and proportionality of the response, as we have suggested, no zonal limit is in fact imposed or required. Perhaps the limit of 200 miles was chosen because it coincides with that of the EEZ and similar zones

[17] See D.P. O'Connell, *op cit*, Ref 11, p 167 passim

and is the zonal limit in the LOS Convention, but there appears to be no particular rationale for the choice of limit. In fact, the MEZ is not fully comparable to the EEZ, since not only is it a security rather than a resource zone but its boundaries, and therefore extent, are differently constructed. EEZs are projected from the baseline of the territorial sea. Baselines can be either straight or natural, and both generally produce an irregular outer limit, often indented, which would make enforcement of a security zone more difficult. The MEZ, on the other hand, was delineated as a circle on points of latitude, making observance and enforcement easier for patrolling ships and aircraft.

When subsequently extending the scope of the zone as a 'total exclusion zone' (TEZ), however, the UK government in its declaration added that the measures were 'without prejudice to the right of the United Kingdom to take additional measures which may be needed in exercise of its rights of self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter',[18] thereby preserving its right to take defensive measures beyond the TEZ. There is no doubt that the initial choice of 200 nautical miles, with its close identification with 200-mile fisheries and other zones led to confusion in the public mind. Many wrongly concluded that 200 miles was an internationally required limit for such security zones and that defensive action could not be taken beyond that limit. The MEZ was extended as a TEZ from 30 April to apply not only to Argentinian warships and naval auxiliaries but also to any other ship, whether naval or merchant vessel, operating in support of the occupation forces. The TEZ also applied to any aircraft, military or civil, operating in support of the occupation. Any such ship or any aircraft found in the TEZ without authority would be regarded as hostile and liable to attack by UK forces.

From 8 May 1982, by a further official declaration the TEZ was vastly extended. The UK government reiterated that the UK had the right to take whatever additional measures might be needed in the exercise of its inherent right of self-defence under Article 51. The TEZ was now extended up to 12 nautical miles from the Argentinian coast and the UK government stated that this was necessary because of the proximity of Argentine bases (on the mainland) and the distances that hostile forces could cover undetected, particularly at night and in bad weather. Argentine warships or military aircraft found more than 12 nautical miles off the Argentinian coast would be regarded as hostile and dealt with accordingly. The TEZ and the preceding MEZ were most effectively enforced by nuclear submarines backed by naval surface vessels.

Although this was a substantial geographical extension of the TEZ, increased the political and military effect and also, to some extent, was different in kind, since it was confined to Argentine warships and military aircraft, it still nevertheless fell short of blockade,[19] which essentially is aimed at cutting off all overseas communication, including commercial cargo traffic of the hostile coastal state. Apart from the extension of the MEZ, the question of enforcement action in and around the MEZ has raised a number of issues. As indicated above, doubt existed concerning what action the UK government might take both within and outside the MEZ. This was classically illustrated by the sinking of the Argentine cruiser *General Belgrano*. The *General Belgrano*, an elderly pre-second world war cruiser, escorted by two destroyers, was attacked on the evening of 2 May by a British Royal Navy submarine, while steaming outside the MEZ, to the south of the Falklands archipelago and was severely damaged. The vessel later sank on 3 May with the loss of over

[18] The Times, 29 April 1982, p 1.
[19] See C.J. Colombos, *The International Law of the Sea*, 6 ed, Longmans, London, 1967, ch XIX.

still needed to maintain vigilance in the area and to reduce the possibility of mistakes leading to further hostilities. One small zone remained, for 'safety reasons', closed to shipping and aircraft of all countries, however: namely, Port Stanley harbour and the three-mile territorial sea round the islands. This zone might be termed a 'safety zone'.

The lifting of the TEZ was regarded as the first step to a gradual ending of the conflict and a return to normal relations which would necessitate the removal of the continuing military and economic sanctions and the resumption of diplomatic relations. Although the Argentinian government had by now recognized the existence of a ceasefire, ambiguities remained concerning its observance by Argentina. On 14 August 1982, however, Argentina made a formal protest both to the UN and the OAS concerning three incidents in the MPZ,[25] in which Argentinian fishing boats[26] were intercepted 'in Argentine waters' between 5–10 August 1982. Argentina stated that UK 'aggression had now been extended to the territorial waters of Argentina'. The UK would, in Argentina's view, be responsible for any further incidents and 'an effective and just peace in the South Atlantic would only be achieved when the UK lifts the protection zone and economic sanctions, withdraws its military occupation forces and its naval forces, including nuclear submarines, from the Falklands and starts negotiating in good faith with the Argentine Republic'. Argentina's note added that it was unacceptable that a state 'should have to ask permission to carry out licit acts in zones under its own jurisdiction'.

A situation of some jurisdictional confusion now exists similar to those which gave rise to the *Pueblo* and *Mayaguez* incidents.[27] As noted earlier, Argentina claims a 200-mile territorial sea, as do 12 other states, 5 of them Latin American.[28] The UK still maintains a 3-mile territorial sea limit round the UK, although it had been officially indicated that it was likely to adopt a 12-mile limit in the near future – and also round the Falkland Islands and the Dependencies. Not only the UK, but most other states, including the USA, do not recognize 200-mile limits for the territorial sea, although most states now recognize 200-mile fisheries zones (FZs) and some 200-mile EEZs. The position has been further confused by the fact that when the LOS Convention, which approves the 12-mile territorial sea and 200-mile EEZ, was put to the vote on 30 April 1982, Argentina voted in favour of adoption of the Convention, while the UK abstained.

Concluding observations

We have tried to look at the nature and operation of the concept of an exclusion zone in the Falkland Islands conflict, against the background of the evolution of coastal-state jurisdiction. As we have seen, jurisdictional extensions have taken many forms – in terms of, for instance, the geographical area covered,[29] the range of powers, and the duration of the zone.

Questions have also arisen as to the precise range of jurisdictional authority *within* the protection zone. Many of these, of course, will be subject to 'rules of engagement' over which surface vessels and submarine commanders will have a sliding scale of discretion, and varying degrees of freedom of action. More difficult are the questions connected with the extension of the range of a security zone, and the defence of its perimeter. Action in relation to the 'outer perimeter' of the zone can and

[25] *The Times*, 14 August 1982, p 4.

[26] *The Harengus, API III* and *Usurbil*.

[27] For further details of the *Pueblo* case, in which North Korea arrested the *Pueblo* 15 miles off its coast on espionage grounds, and the *Mayaguez* incident, in which a US merchant vessel was arrested 6½ miles off [illegible] Pulo Wai Islands, see D.P. [illegible] and Patricia Birnie (eds), *The [illegible] Dimension*, George Allen and Unwin, 1980, pp 171–172.

[28] 'Survey of legislation on coastal state requirements for foreign fishing', *FAO Legislative Study No 21*, FAO, Rome, 1981. The eleven 200-mile territorial sea states are: Argentina, Benin, Brazil, Congo (People's Republic), Ecuador, El Salvador, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Panama, Sierra Leone, South Democratic Republic, Uruguay.

[29] In August 1981 clashes took place between US aircraft from a naval task force holding manoeuvres in the Gulf of Sidra and Libyan aircraft over the Gulf of Sirte, some sixty miles off the Libyan coast, claimed by Libya as territorial sea. Two Libyan SU-22 were shot down (*The Times*, 20 August 1981, and *The Times*, 18 March 1982).

300 crew. In the communiqué following the sinking of the *General Belgrano*, the Argentinian Foreign Ministry, drawing attention to the issue of the outer limit of the MEZ, accused the UK government of 'treacherous aggression' strongly condemning the attack as illegal since the *General Belgrano* was 36 miles outside the zone.[20] The presumption on the part of the Argentinian government that there was a geographical limit of action was not shared by the UK government. In the UK communiqué of 5 May, the action against the *General Belgrano* was seen as based on the inherent right of self-defence as provided for in Article 51 of the UN Charter. In the UK view, therefore, the existence of a 200-mile security zone was not a limitation on the right in customary international law of self-defence, and of taking proportionate action anywhere.

On the question of the proportionate use of force, the communiqué noted the UK warning which had been issued on [illegible] that 'any approach on the part of Argentine warships including [illegible] naval auxiliaries or military aircraft which could amount to a threat to interfere with the mission of the British forces would be met by the appropriate response'.[21] It will be recalled that when announcing the TEZ from 30 April 1982, the UK government had stated that it was without prejudice to its rights under Article 51 to take other defensive measures. The extension of the TEZ to 12 miles off the Argentinian coast followed the sinking of the *General Belgrano*.

A reported civilian casualty of the conflict was the 220000t Liberian tanker, Hercules, which was bombed on 8 June 1982 by an unidentified aircraft about 500 miles north-east of the Falkland Islands en route from St Croix in the US Virgin Islands to the Alaskan oil port of Valdez.[22] The vessel concerned was outside the TEZ limit to the east of the Falkland Islands and the incident serves to emphasize the point that such zones cannot remove all uncertainties concerning areas of safe passage in a conflict region; the general 'war zone' cannot be neatly delineated.

Maritime protection zone

On 23 July 1982, following the acceptance of a cease-fire by Argentina, the TEZ, including the 12-mile limit along the Argentinian coast, was replaced by a formal request to the Argentinians to ensure that their warships and military aircraft did not enter a 150-mile zone around the Falkland Islands and its Dependencies, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, without prior authorization from the UK government.[23] The request was passed to Argentina through the Swiss government which was acting as intermediary in the absence of diplomatic relations. The UK government had come under pressure from a number of countries whose registered vessels used the important sea routes round the Falklands to lift the TEZ, which until then had meant that no shipping of any country could effectively pass west of the Falklands. The UK Prime Minister subsequently stated that British forces would nevertheless continue to have authority to 'take all necessary measures to protect themselves against attack *anywhere* in the South Atlantic and to defend the Falkland Islands and its dependencies under Article 51'. The new zone had been established 'to minimize the risk of misunderstanding and inadvertent clashes'.[24]

No new terminology seems to have been used for this new zone: it has been referred to by Argentina, however, as we shall see below, as a 'protection zone' and we shall refer to it as a 'maritime protection zone' (MPZ) to distinguish it from the earlier zone. The UK considered that it

[20] *The Guardian*, 5 May 1982, p 24.
[21] *The Guardian*, 4 May 1982, p 1.
[22] *The Guardian*, 9 June 1982, p 1.
[23] *The Guardian*, 23 July 1982, p 1; *The Scotsman*, 23 July 1982, p 4.
[24] *The Guardian*, *ibid.*

does create a number of difficulties. What precisely is the limit of powers within the security zone? What action is permissible by the 'zonal' state *vis-à-vis* enemy vessels or aircraft on or near the boundaries of the zone, and can such vessels or aircraft consider themselves 'immune' or even temporarily *hors de combat?* A third question concerns the status of civil merchant vessels and aircraft which attempt either to keep out of the war zone by skirting its edges, or to run covertly through the zone.

The comment by one distinguished writer in the field that all such operations are 'peculiar'[30] is certainly justified by events during the Falklands crisis, which has surely contributed to zonal history. What are the distinctive points emerging from the use of zones in the conflict? Did the MEZ, TEZ or MPZ accord with any of the zonal precedents,[31] if there can be said to be any precedents in this unsettled field of

It seems that there have traditionally been two kinds of war [illegible]. First, zones have been used to localize limited wars to the *territorial* [illegible] of the belligerents, to indicate to neutrals the area of belligerent [illegible] and minimize the risk to them, as for example in the Spanish [illegible] War, Vietnam, the Middle East wars of 1967 and 1973 and the Indo-Pakistan war. Such zones are more akin to and often coincide with traditional blockade. The second kind of zone, which is the precursor of those used in the Falklands dispute is one covering large areas of the *high seas*, in which all ships are warned they enter at their peril, at risk of being sunk because they are presumed to be hostile.

Such zones, as declared by Germany in the first and second world wars, are based on the right of self-defence or necessity. This enables the defending state to overcome the problem, particularly acute when submarines are enforcing the zone, of positively identifying neutral ships. As we have pointed out, there are ambiguities in the international law of self-defence related to the assessment of the urgency of the threat or attack and to the proportionality of the response, which have been aggravated by advances in air and sea conventional and nuclear missile technology. There seems to be no law requiring that hostilities be restricted to territorial waters: indeed, even if there were, the Argentine 200-mile territorial sea vastly extends the area which would be considered operational. The growth of state sovereign rights and jurisdictions over large areas of the continental shelf and in the EEZ must also be regarded as having increased the area that states regard as defensive 'territory'.

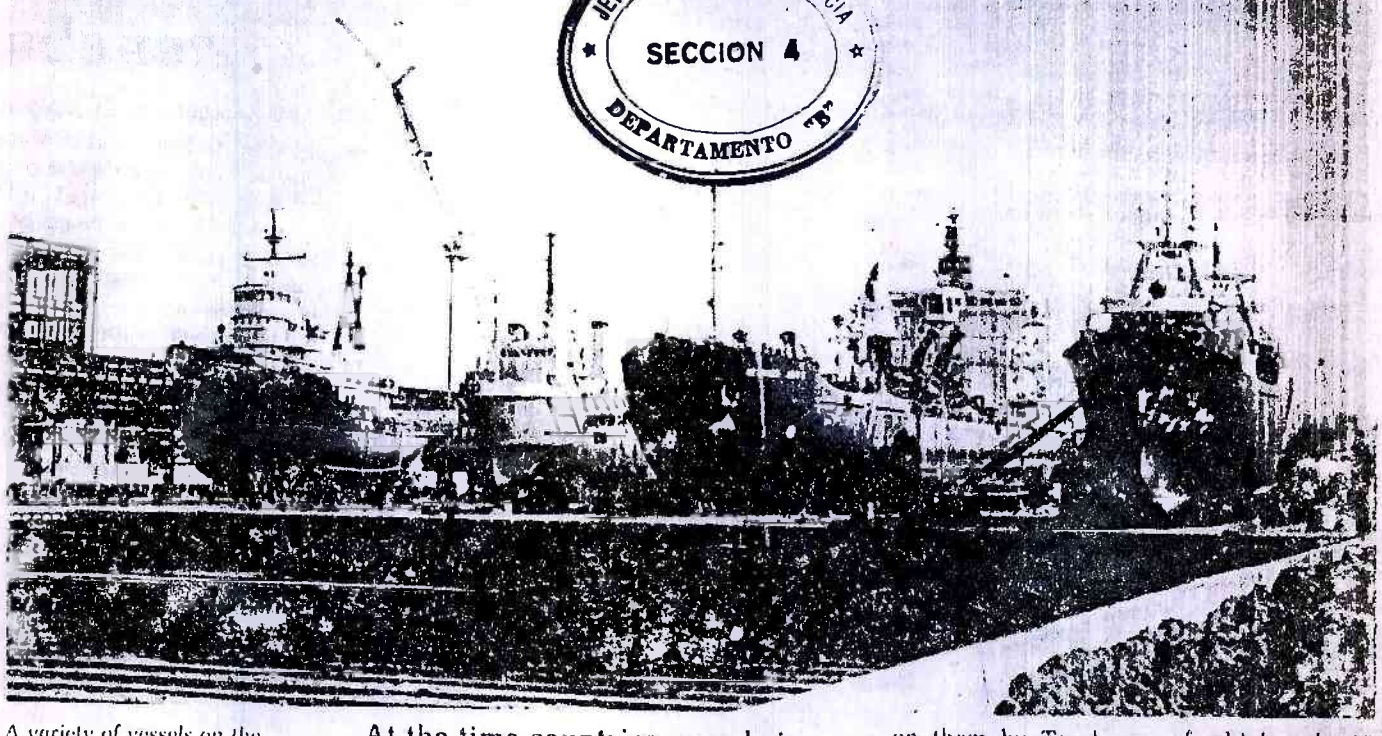
The law remains open-ended so far as the limits, purposes and precedents for action in security or protection zones are concerned. That state practice will continue to accumulate, however, is evidenced by the declaration on 13 August 1982 by Iraq of a security zone over the north of the Gulf, applying to the Kharg Island area following the sinking of a Liberian-flagged cargo ship *Liston Bride* and the 160001 South Korean *Sambow Banner*. The Greek Merchant Navy Ministry said the *Liston Bride* was en route to the Iranian port of Bandar Khomeini when it was hit by an Iraqi rocket. The South Korean Foreign Ministry stated that the *Sambow Banner* was probably hit by artillery fire. An Iraqi military spokesman gave as the reason for the exclusion zone that Iraqi forces had difficulty telling whether ships were friendly or hostile.[32] The issues raised by the Falkland 'security' or 'protection' zone are likely to become even more pressing as the precedent for extended security jurisdictions is copied, and in the light of the revelation that the UK changed its rules of engagement in order to authorize the sinking of the *General Belgrano* outside the MEZ.[33]

[30] D.P. O'Connell, *op cit*, Ref 11, p 131.
[31] See Ann Hollick, 'The origins of 200 mile offshore zones', *AJIL*, 1977, pp 494–500 for a survey and references to lists of precedents.
[32] *The Times*, 13 August 1982, p 5.
[33] *The Times*, 4 October 1981, p 1; *The Scotsman*, 4 October 1982. See also letter from Professor G. Best, *The Times*, 11 October 1982, questioning the legality of this revision. However, our own view is that the action remained legal if justified on grounds of self-defence.

022

ARGENTINA'S REPAIR CAPABILITY

JEFATURA DE INTELIGENCIA
SECCION 4
DEPARTAMENTO 'B'



A variety of vessels on the repair area at the head of the Syncrolift

At the time countries were being visited and information being collected for this South American feature, there was no hint that Argentina intended an invasion of the Falklands. Since then, of course, the capacity of the facilities described in this first article, outlining Argentina's repair capability, has taken on a new aspect; not so much because of a possible outright need to repair warships but because of the facilities available for the repair of auxiliary merchant vessels. In times of hostilities exceptional conversions and repairs are attempted in very little time, out of need. If that need should arise for Argentina, no doubt some of the facilities described here will need to be used. A eature describing Argentine building capabilities appeared in the March issue of our sister journal Shipping World & Shipbuilder.

One of the major repair facilities in South America is Argentina's Tandanor yard, and 90% of their business, including naval vessels, is for Argentine owners. Other ships calling for repair include Greek, Chilean and Brazilian flags. In the year to July 31 1981 about 222 ships had work done on them by Tandanor, of which only 15 were foreign. However, this is expected to change as since the last massive 500% devaluation of the Argentine peso in April 1981, Argentina's prices have become much more competitive.

About 60% of the domestic repairs are covered by Tandanor, and the approximately 30 private establishments, which includes workshops in addition to the few yards with actual repair slips, cover the remainder.

The private yard group are quick to point out that much of Tandanor's work is for actual drydocking whereas much of the general repair work is sub-contracted out by Tandanor anyway.

All nationally owned ships have to go to Tandanor whereas the private yards obtain about 50% of their business from overseas customers. Before devaluation, it was known for some Argentine owners to repair abroad where it was cheaper. Major customers are the Greeks, Chileans, Brazilians, and ships flying the Norwegian, Swedish and Liberian flags. Recently there has been an increase in enquiries from United States owners, although again, recent events may now change this.

Competition for Argentine repair yards is considered to be mainly from Curacao, although for some South Atlantic traffic South Africa offers an alternative. Brazil's Renave complex is not seen as a major competitor.

Also competitive is Uruguay, and in Montevideo the Greek owner Tsakos has established a repair facility. One advantage

Tandanor facilities

Yard 1. North basin
2 drydocks 180 m × 22 m
1 floating dock 126 m × 17.1 m
Lifting capacity 3500 t
1 floating dock 65.8 m × 13.3 m
Lifting capacity 600 t
Repair quays 480 m
Cranage.
Floating 30 t
Other, 40, 20 & 15 t

Yard 2. South basin
Syncrolift 184 m × 32.4 m
Lifting capacity 12 500 t
1 floating dock 172 m × 26.6 m
Lifting capacity 12 000 t
Repair quays 1385 m
Cranage 80, 15, 13 & 10 t

Uruguay does have is a duty free arrangement for ship spares. If established in Argentina this would obviate irksome Customs formalities and encourage the stocking of items which are now ordered when needed, with consequent delay, or drawn from the ship's own stores. Argentina is trying to establish such a system but in the meantime some owners choose Uruguay for its convenience in this respect.

Tandanor

A milestone in Tandanor's development as a major repair facility, able to repair ships up to 60 000 dwt, must be the installation of the Syncrolift. The Syncrolift first came into operation in October 1979 and this doubled Tandanor's drydocking capacity virtually overnight. Since its installation about 100 ships per year have been lifted on it. Of the complete installation, built to the design of the Pearlson Engineering Company of the USA, the winches, cables, motors and control consoles were bought in, the rest being fabricated by Tandanor.

It is still the largest Syncrolift in operation in the world, although Todd Shipyards in America have one under construction which is slightly larger.

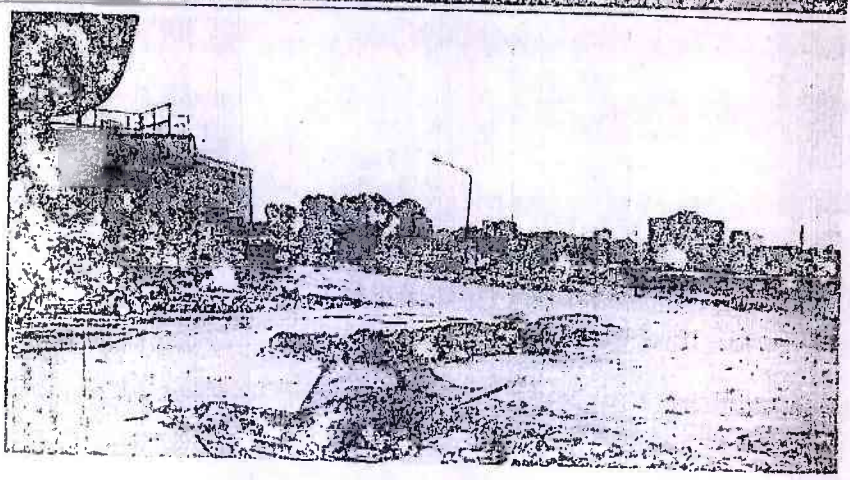
It could be that Tandanor have the final say however, as in the original design provision was made for a 20 m extension to be added and space has been left to accommodate the necessary four more pairs of winches and control console instrumentation.

There is also space available for another three 200 m long berths should these be necessary. At the beginning of the year the three existing berths at the head of the Syncrolift were all extended by 50 m to 240, 215 and 200 m respectively, giving a grand total of 1150 m of berth length, including the Syncrolift itself. This extension was achieved by simply pushing down the boundary fence and building a new road 50 m further away.

Currently a limitation on ship size is the depth of the Riachuelo river which is about 10 m. Work is now in progress by the dredger *New York* to increase the depth to 13 m at the East Quay, No. 2 yard of Tandanor, where the Syncrolift is located. The North Quay No. 1 yard has one or two small drydocks only. The lift itself can lift a maximum of 12 500 t although this reduces to 11 000 t for all practical purposes. Its length is 184 m. If later the extra 20 m is added then a small increase in lift capacity, by 1000 t, will be gained.

Floating docks are also available at the No. 2 yard and their dimensions are given in the accompanying table. Chile, which has some good repair facilities is not generally in competition with Atlantic coast nations as she obtains her repair work from vessels trading in the Pacific.

An advantage for Argentina's Tandanor is that Buenos Aires is a terminal port with many ships leaving in ballast, to pick up cargoes elsewhere in South America. This often means it is convenient for them to undergo repair while in this condition.



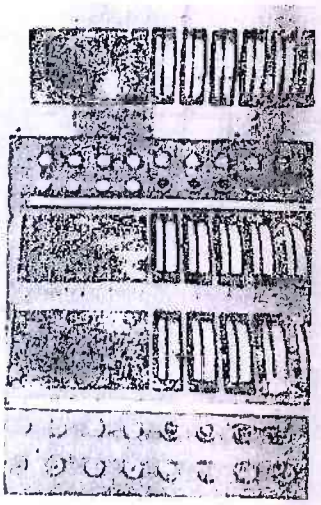
The available extra repair space was increased by diverting a road

Other yards

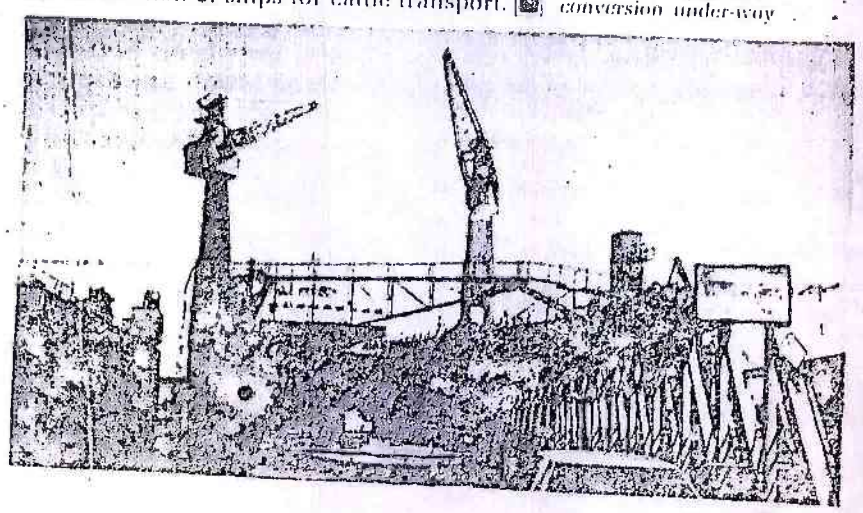
Although principally engaged in shipbuilding, the yard Alianza, situated on the Riachuelo river is now actively engaged in seeking repair work. This is because, resulting from their location on a bend of the river, it has been necessary for them to use Syncrolifts for launching their ships. And having just completed modernisation of their plate handling shops, it is clearly in their interest to try and utilise their 2500t and 9200t lifting capacity lifts for longer periods than the six or so hours needed to transfer a newbuilding from the berth to the water. This yard has excellent facilities suited for ship repair to all types of vessels. (see 'Shipping World and Shipbuilder', March 1982 edition.)

Two other Argentine yards, Astilleros Vanoli, located south east of Buenos Aires at Puerto Quequeir and Astilleros Corrientes S.A. in the north east of the country on the Parana river are engaged in repairs. Both yards deal with the repair of smaller craft, dredgers, river barges, tugs and fishing vessels.

The small yard Mercurio Naval, opposite Alianza on the Riachuelo river, is engaged in repairs to ships alongside river berths, it having no slipping facilities. The yard Almirante Brown, again on the Riachuelo, is managed by the consultancy company Sanym. Here repairs to small craft are carried out but they also undertake conversion work, one of their most notable jobs being the conversion of ships for cattle transport.



Space on the Syncrolift control panel, available for instrumentation if the 20 m extension is added



Floating docks at the North basin with repair and conversion under-way

033
FAIRPLAY (3/6/82)
JEFATURA DE INTELIGENCIA
SECCION 4
DEPARTAMENTO "D"

World News

Conference accord brings Maersk back into FEFC fold

ON the eve of the departure from the Far Eastern Freight Conference of the Danish Maersk Line, an agreement has been reached that will hopefully enable the Copenhagen operator to remain within the conference. The imminent departure of Maersk had been caused by a variety of disputes, with the ability of the company to have U.K. loading rights one of of the most fundamental causes of assent. The company had been trying for some ten years to obtain U.K. loading rights, and in recent years had been incensed by the ability of competing companies to enter this lucrative trade while they remained, by the terms of their conference membership, excluded. The entry into service of the fleet of full containerships at the beginning of last year prompted the Danish operator to seek to have its FEFC membership terms, which were based on conventional ship conditions, revised, but extensive negotiations failed to achieve any of accommodation. Accordingly Maersk tendered notice of their resignation from the conference, effective from the beginning of this month. The move was received with dismay at the FEFC, this conference having distinguished itself in the past by the solidarity it has shown in times of crisis. While there were not a few members that thought the Danish erator was bluffing, it was clear from the tonnage coming into service under the Maersk house flag, and the rapid organisation of independent arrangements in the U.K. and elsewhere, that the Copenhagen owners were more than capable of mounting an effective independent operation on the Far East liner service.

In the intervening months, there have been a number of other cracks beginning to show in the hitherto immaculate FEFC facade. During the spring, hard hitting though positive remarks were made about the need to update tariffs to meet container age requirements, by the managing director of the ScanDutch consortium Erik Petersen. However the problem seems to have been the difficulty of maintaining conference unanimity among a membership as varied as that of the Far Eastern trade members, which include container and conventional owners, members from the developing world, Comecon countries and the developed nations.

In addition, since the notice of the Maersk withdrawal there has been a considerable upsurge of independent operations, chief of these being the new tonnage and aggressive marketing of the Evergreen Lines. Trade has also been down, the trans-Siberian railway has been appreciably recovering from its post-Afghanistan recession, and there have been new threats such as the rumoured ordering of the gigantic United States Lines round-the-world containerships. All this has doubtlessly combined to make both the Danish owner and the conference itself more in a mood to compromise. Accordingly, on May 14th, new proposals to revise the membership terms of Maersk were initiated, and last week negotiations were concluded with an agreement that will enable the Danish operator to operate to and from the United Kingdom within the terms of their conference membership. The agreement is still subject to the ratification of the conference membership and to allow time for this to take place, the Maersk notice of resignation has been postponed to June 15th.

It is possible that the new conditions will do something to remove the problems of other container ship operating members as the agreement also includes "the introduction of a modern container tariff which better reflects today's customer requirements." The FEFC is also known to be talking with the Taiwanese Evergreen Line.

Falklands crisis demonstrates need for strong merchant fleet

WITH more than forty ships already requisitioned or chartered for service in the South Atlantic, the current crisis has "demonstrated more clearly than any event since World War 2 that the Merchant Navy is the fourth arm of defence". The assertion was made last week in the annual report of the General Council of British Shipping, which noted that the naval task force in the South Atlantic "could not live" without the support of the merchant ships.

The annual report, recording a bitter year when the U.K. fleet has been subject to great reductions in difficult trading conditions, which have apparently gone unnoticed by the government is not without a certain irony in view of the sudden governmental interest in the merchant marine for its ability to sustain the military efforts.

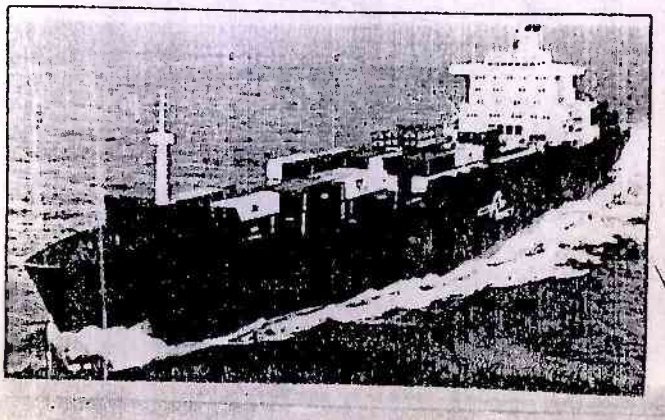
It notes that outside the NATO area there are no plans in existence for the use of merchant fleets in a support role, despite the increasing global instability and likelihood that conflicts may break out in any part of the world.

The report goes on to ask whether, world. The report goes on to ask whether, with the steady decline in the numbers of ships there will be a sufficient quantity of the right type of ship to cope with subsequent crises.

Reiterating the industry's plea for additional investment allowances to provide incentives to renew the fast ageing fleet, the report notes that the merchant navy's role in an emergency is just one of the reasons why the shipowners' organisation was continuing to press the government for aid.

Going on to quantify the decline in the U.K. flag tonnage the report disclosed that last year the U.K. owned and registered fleet suffered its biggest ever tonnage loss, with a net reduction of 147 ships of 6.5m d.w.t.

This meant that two-fifths of the U... fleet had gone in six years and the U.K. share in the world total had gone down to -4.3 per cent compared with 9 per cent in 1975.



First merchant ship casualty in the South Atlantic - Cunard's "Atlantic Conveyor" (Skyfotos picture).

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040

JEFATURA DE INTELIGENCIA
SECCION 4
DEPARTAMENTO "F"

FALKLAND ISLANDS

Will peace prove harder than war?

The recapture of Stanley and the surrender of all Argentine troops on the Falklands on June 14th were the logical and successful conclusion to the sending of the task force from Britain in early April. The victory is a vindication of Mrs Thatcher's policy that aggression should not pay, and a proof that, although many parts of Britain have fallen into disarray, the country is in military matters still capable of decisive, effective action.

The prime minister has been given her due credit in enthusiastic scenes in the house of commons. But beyond the isolated world in which politicians live, there has been no great outpouring of euphoria or nationalist fervour in Britain. Rather, in keeping with what is still the national character, the military victory has been met with a measure of quiet pride, relief and reserve—and with concern for the dead, for the prisoners taken and for the prospects of a lasting peace for the islanders themselves.

The greatest immediate problem is to make effective contact with the junta in Buenos Aires. By June 17th there had been no firm indication as to whether or not hostilities were at an end. Only an acknowledgement of this will permit a swift return of the 8,000 or so prisoners to Argentina, a lifting of the economic and diplomatic sanctions that have been imposed on that country, and a speedy journey home for the 100 ships and most of the 25,000 men in the British task force. The political disorder in Argentina means that any initial answer must be fairly dusty: but for three days after the surrender there was no answer at all, only silence.

Britain and the United States agree that, outside the immediate tidying-up necessities, there is little point in starting diplomatic talks with Argentina until time has passed for emotions to cool and, just as important, for an effective leadership to emerge in Buenos Aires. It would be unfortunate if specific proposals were put forward either by Britain or by a neutral country which a bruised Argentina promptly, and perhaps to its own subsequent regret, turned down. Generally benevolent noises, fuzzy though they may be, are for the moment the best course for Britain.

The aim is to make it clear to Argentina that no door is being shut by Britain—except a return to full Argentine control of the Falklands—in the hope that this will persuade the Argentines not to slam any doors of their own. Argentina needs time and is in no political state to make difficult decisions. The fairly generous terms in which the British military com-

Those prisoners of war

No mess is worse than a used battlefield. But cleaning up the soggy, frozen hills around Stanley, restoring the ruined water supply (a careless Argentine driver crushed a main with his armoured personnel carrier) and repairing the much-bombed airport are secondary problems for the British. The first concern is what to do about the huge numbers of Argentine prisoners.

At the surrender, the Argentine commander's figures suggested that he had 14,800 men in the islands, including 11,000 in Stanley itself and about 2,000 on West Falkland. It is not clear whether this total included the nearly 1,500 prisoners already taken and the several hundred Argentines killed. Either way, preliminary reports from the British task force suggest that the actual number may be considerably smaller than General Menendez's claim.

Whatever the precise number, there are a lot of beaten Argentines. According to British reports, many of them are in poor condition, suffering not only from cold and foot-rot, fairly common ailments of soldiers in winter, but also hunger and disease. Among the British troops too there are reports of bad health and dangers of an epidemic.

The British task force commander, Rear-Admiral Sandy Woodward, issued a dramatic statement on June 16th saying that many of the prisoners could die of malnutrition and disease unless the Argentines agreed to an end to hostilities and allowed them to be repatriated swiftly. This was designed to put pressure on the Argentine junta to announce publicly that the war is over. Under the terms of the Geneva convention, Britain is not required to return prisoners until after the end of hostilities.

Within two days of the surrender, Britain had brought one ship into Port Stanley and begun putting prisoners on board. Others are being held on the windy airfield, and some have been sent back to their dug-outs. Once the repatriation starts, two trips each by *Norland* and *Canberra* could probably carry all the prisoners to an Argentine port or to Montevideo in next-door Uruguay.

However, although some earlier prisoners have already been sent home, there seems to be no intention to start to move any of the newly captured troops out of Stanley until Argentina acknowledges the end of hostilities. Until then

Not having a nice day

the British are stuck with the duty to take care of them. The main problems are sanitation, shelter and medical care. There is enough food, and the prisoners seem to be in better condition than Admiral Woodward's first statement indicated. But the tents that were intended to shelter prisoners went down when the *Atlantic Conveyor* was sunk. And the weather is worsening by the day.

QS

mand accepted the surrender of General Menendez—avoiding the handing over of flags and allowing him to strike out the word "unconditional"—set the right tone for politicians to follow.

Mrs Thatcher says that, whereas good relations with Argentina are essential in the long run for the islands and for Britain, concessions on sovereignty or an Argentine presence on the Falklands are no longer matters for consideration. That may be a precision which will later be regretted; it is desirable to keep open a wide range of options short of the solution Argentina disastrously tried to impose by force. But as if to prove her point that the Falklands will return exactly to the status they enjoyed before the Argentine invasion, Mrs Thatcher announced that she will be sending back Mr Rex Hunt, the governor whom the Argentines expelled, as civil commissioner.

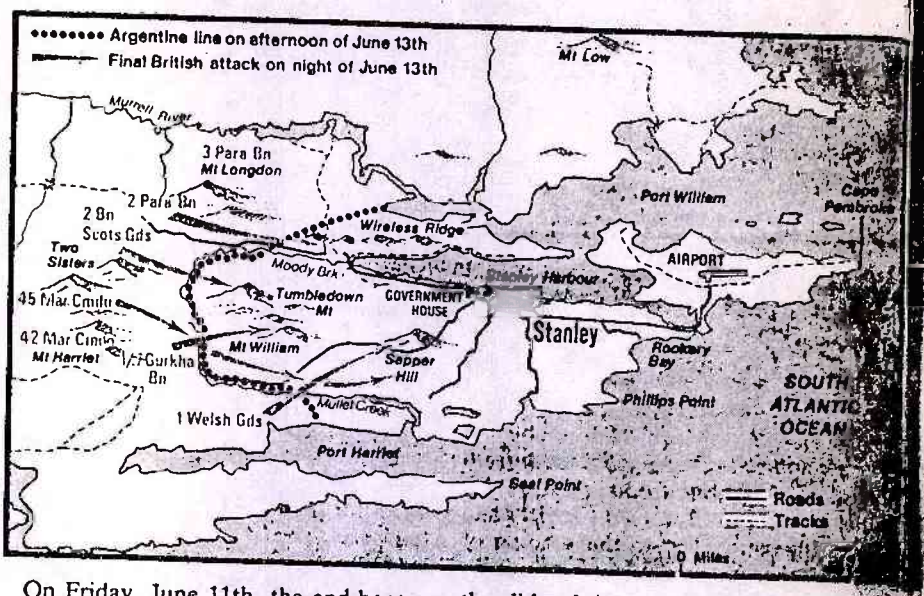
He will share power with the military governor, Major-General Jeremy Moore, who commanded the attack on Stanley and has been received by the usually dour Falkland Islanders with an enthusiasm which leaves no doubt of their desire to remain British. Mrs Thatcher herself is now playing with the idea of an international force on the islands, hoping she can coax the United States or a Latin American country to join it. It could be followed in time by the full independence of the Falklands, as the United Nations' smallest member. That goal may prove yet more difficult than the capture of Port Stanley.

The last battle

Taking the high ground

The end came with surprising suddenness. After three days of sporadic fighting in the hills west of Stanley, demoralised Argentine defenders broke and ran in the early morning of June 14th. A few hours later, ceasefire; then, that evening, Major-General Menendez surrendered not only the Stanley garrison but all the Argentine forces on the east and west Falkland Islands to the British forces.

The final British advance followed nearly two weeks of consolidation of the British positions along the Argentine perimeter, of moving supplies, of getting the 5th brigade forward from Bluff Cove and, in the words of one British officer, of "making sure every gaiter button was sewed on". This delay, together with the long dig-in after the original landing at San Carlos, points both to the thoroughness of the British army and to its willingness to fight a long campaign.



On Friday, June 11th, the end began. In a night assault designed to take advantage of their better training and coordination, British infantry advanced behind artillery fire on to Two Sisters, Mount Harriet and Mount Longdon (see map). The sharpest fight was at Longdon, where Argentine dead are estimated at nearly 60. About 25 British troops were killed in all three battles. The next day Argentina's air force mounted its final four air attacks, losing one aircraft to a Sea Dart missile but doing little damage to the British positions. That night the British pushed forward again, on to Tumbledown, Wireless Ridge, Mount William and Sapper Hill, the last high ground before Stanley itself.

It was over. In daylight on Monday Argentine troops were seen streaming back in disorder through the defensive positions to their rear. The rout gathered momentum. White flags came out in Stanley; British troops advanced to the outskirts of the town, under orders not to fire unless fired upon.

That night the British ground-force commander, Major-General Jeremy Moore, accepted the formal surrender and an assurance that Argentina would cease attacking British forces. The British flag was hoisted on government house after 72 days of Argentine occupation.

Argentina

The world needs a steady Argentina

BUENOS AIRES

The best that could come from the Falklands conflict would be for Argentina to take a long, cool look at itself. How is it possible for this educated, cosmopolitan and potentially wealthy country to stop the slide of the past 30 years? The worst that could come would be for defeat in the Falklands to spur yet another round of coups, chaos and terrorism. This week it looked as if disorder was more probable than cool-headedness. Violent demonstrations took place in Buenos Aires; the old political rifts, which had disappeared under the unity of war, showed themselves again; and Argentina's Latin American neighbours, for the most part quietly pleased that its folly had caught up with it, turned their backs.

For Britain and the United States this growing isolation of Argentina is much to be regretted. To whom can the British turn to be assured of an effective ceasefire, or to negotiate the return of prisoners and the lifting of sanctions? And with which group can Washington deal to provide the long-term diplomatic succour Argentina needs?

President Galtieri and the junta may survive the present wave of discontent, but both have shown themselves to be incapable of making realistic decisions and to be dangerously removed from the Argentine establishment. Yet any swift return to democracy would guarantee a period of instability—with the exaggerated rhetoric of elections—and the threat of renewed terrorism, and perhaps dictatorship, from the left. This will be the most difficult legacy of the failed attempt to take over the Falklands.

Successive governments have indoctrinated the Argentines with the idea that the Malvinas are theirs as an undisputed right. After the invasion of April 2nd, the propaganda machine convinced them that the islands were now theirs forever. General Mario Benjamin Menendez, the commander of the Argentine troops on the Falklands, was widely quoted as saying that his men would fight to the last drop of blood. This week the Argentines woke up to the reality that they did not.

Galtieri still can't say surrender

and with bitterness turned on those who they believed had deceived them.

In a speech on the night of June 15th, President Galtieri admitted that the battle for the Malvinas was over. He carefully excluded any mention of surrender, praising Argentine troops for their "supreme and heroic efforts" in defending the islands.

But the speech was televised from a room deep within the presidential palace and not, as had been planned, delivered in person from the traditional balcony overlooking the central square. A few hours before the general's appearance the state-controlled media urged all "patriotic Argentines" to congregate in the square and warmly to applaud the speech. The few who turned up found instead a pitched battle between riot police and angry demonstrators who were calling President Galtieri a traitor and trying to storm the palace. Had the president appeared on the balcony for his "encounter with the people" he would probably have been pelted.

President Galtieri's broadcast promised political change leading to democracy. But the nation at large remains unsatisfied. The president's days in office appear to be numbered. For the first time since President Galtieri took power last December, rumblings of discontent are to be heard within the armed forces. Hardline army officers, dissatisfied with the way the war was going, put pressure on General Galtieri to resign before the British troops made their final advance on Port Stanley. Throughout this week military men have been meeting, plotting, blaming. Most people in Buenos Aires expect a change soon.

The wartime "alliance" between the junta and Argentina's political parties broke up as soon as news of General Menendez's capitulation reached Buenos Aires. Mr Raul Alfonsin, a leading member of the moderate Radical party, called for the immediate end of the military regime and its replacement by a transitional civilian government:

> The majority of Argentines no longer wants to be manipulated. The armed forces have had their institution jeopardised by a minority ready to do anything to increase its power.

Mr Mario Campori, a leader of the left-wing faction of Peronists, said that "the Malvinas have added to a long chain of failures since the 1976 military takeover. There is only one way—all power to the people." Multipartidaria, the grouping of the five major parties, has called for a general election before the end of 1983.

Perhaps the only true note President Galtieri struck in his address was that Argentina would never give up its struggle to obtain sovereignty over the Falklands. That is a widespread sentiment in Argentina, even after the defeat at Port Stanley.

The costs

Don't fudge it

After the battle, the accounting. As in all modern wars, the South Atlantic campaign has swallowed up large quantities of military equipment and supplies. The British government must now address the issues of how and when to pay the bills. The costs can be split into four categories:

- Unavoidable expenses for the 1982-83 financial year: these are now in excess of £500m. Such costs include the enormous amounts of fuel burned up (perhaps £300m worth), the exceptional costs of dispatching the task force in the first place, the extra spare parts and supplies needed during the campaign, and the cost of requisitioning, converting and running the 50-odd merchant ships used. This figure could still rise, depending on how much longer the task force must remain in the South Atlantic.
- Replacing lost equipment and ammunition—for example, the many expensive missiles fired and the 10 Harrier aircraft and more than 20 helicopters lost and destroyed, plus the cost of repairing the wear, tear and damage of the operations. An accurate estimate of the total cost in this category is impossible, for two reasons: the damage has not yet all been reckoned; and there is a large element of choice. Some lost equipment, for example, may be replaced by more modern models. Our guess is that around £400m will be needed.
- Major capital costs: the four destroyers and frigates lost, plus the two amphibious ships badly damaged. Replacement will probably cost more than £600m.
- The cost of maintaining a permanent garrison in the Falklands. The garrison is likely to consist at first of about 3,000 men, plus a squadron of Phantom fighter aircraft, helicopters, anti-aircraft missile batteries and a lot of electronic warning equipment. Again there is an element of choice: the men and much of the hardware could be taken from the present armed forces, at little immediate expense; or new forces could be recruited

And now to trade

The end of the fighting in the Falklands does not mean an immediate end to the trade and financial sanctions against Argentina. The eight EEC countries still maintaining an embargo on imports from Argentina will wait until the meeting of foreign ministers on June 21st to see whether the war is really over.

Once the political decision is taken, sanctions can be lifted overnight. Although EEC countries account for about 25% of Argentina's exports, so many ways around the embargo have been found that importers may not notice much difference once the ban is removed. Europe's various restrictions on arms sales to Argentina are likely to remain in place for longer. No European country will be keen to rearm Argentina for a second round of war.

The unilateral British freeze on Argentine assets in London—now put at around $1 billion—could stay in place for some time, at least until a clear Argentine commitment to cease hostilities. But until Britain lifts its sanctions, Argentina's freeze both on British imports and on the payment of British debts (over which there is a potential dispute between British and other lending banks, see page 102) will undoubtedly remain. Since the lack of Argentine debt repayments is hurting several British banks, notably Lloyds, the City will want financial channels to be cleared as soon as possible, before expensive lawyers get dragged into sorting out their tangled claims.

It will not be long before Argentina needs to return to the London-based Euromarkets to borrow. With its existing $34 billion of outstanding external debts, and uncertain politics, it will find the rates far higher than before its invasion of the Falklands—if it can find the money at all.

and established. The once-off costs of setting up the garrison will range between £50m and £500m, depending on how it is made up. On top of that, running costs could amount to £100m a year.

In all, the Falklands campaign and its aftermath will have cost between £1.6 billion and £2 billion. There is a right and a wrong way to pay this bill. The first decison is about timing.

Fast is right, slow is wrong. Replacements of aircraft and missiles, for example, can either be ordered for early delivery, so that production is then stepped up, or ordered as extras at the end of the production runs. There are two good reasons for buying them as soon as possible. First, Britain has suffered large losses and is now much less able to meet its most important commitment—to Nato. For Britain's own security it must replenish its hangars and magazines as fast as possible. Second, it will in many cases prove cheaper to buy things more quickly. British production lines are generally operating below their most efficient rate. To speed them up would lower unit costs.

The trickest choice for the government will be whether to increase defence spending to pay the bills, or to try to squeeze at least some of the money from within existing defence budget allocations. There will be great pressure, particularly from the treasury, to get the Falklands garrison installed without increasing the size of the armed forces, to do without some of the equipment lost, and to get at least some of the money by trimming other essential defence needs. Any of these would endanger the security of Britain. Britain's forces were already near the bottom of safety margin before the war started. The cost of the Falklands must not be allowed to drag them down further.

How to pay the piper?

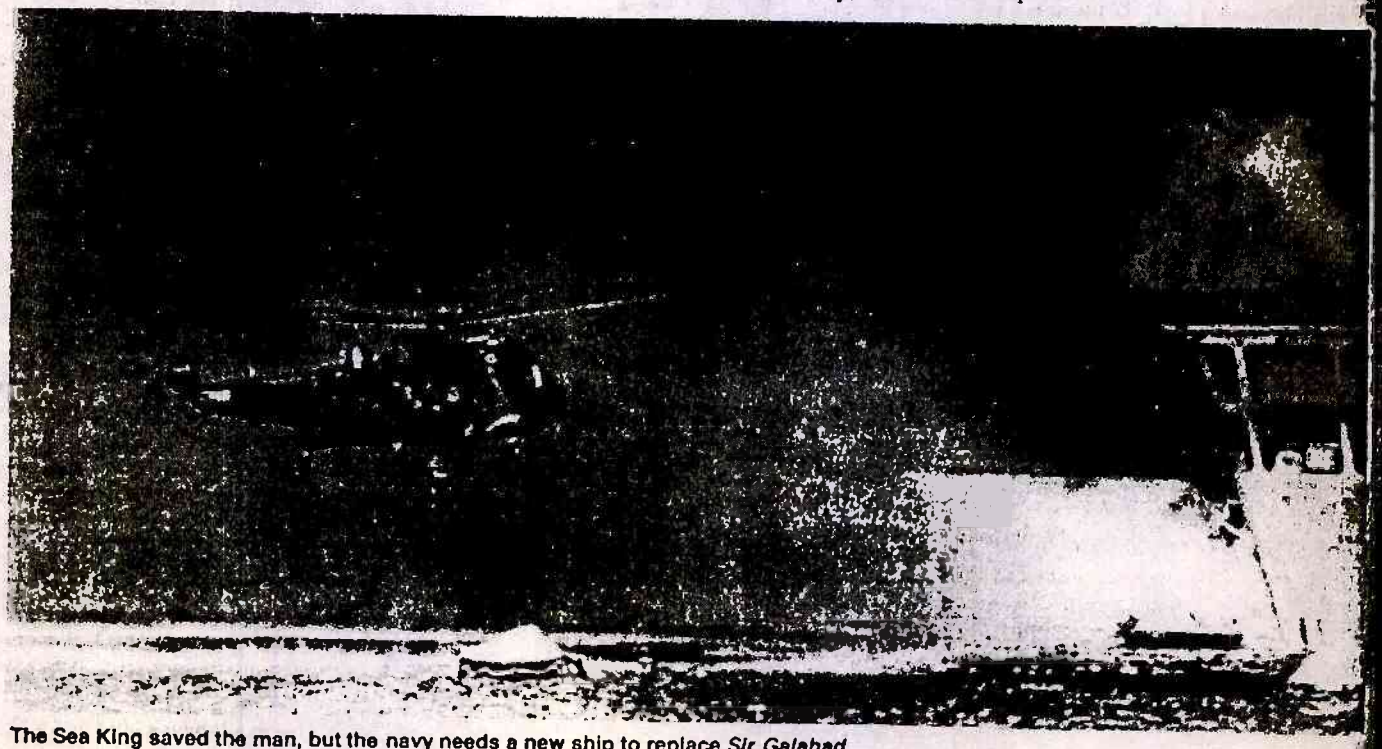
Few people in Britain doubt that retaking the Falklands was worth doing, and worth the money spent (around £35 a head). However, this present willingness to pay cannot easily be translated into ships, aircraft and missiles. A special "Falklands bond" perhaps, a special war tax, a smaller tax-reduction in the next budget, or just let the bill nudge up government borrowing which has been falling as a proportion of gnp? But even if the money could be raised by public subscription during the next week, it could not be spent. The ships and weapons cannot all be built in a year, and they can be paid for only once they have been built: the cost will not, and cannot be made to, hit the treasury all at once.

The orders to build all this military hardware will provide welcome jobs in some of Britain's most depressed areas. But to raise all the money now, while the euphoria remains, would actually be as deflationary for the economy as are most tax increases. To wait until the money is needed before launching a bond would be to risk a humiliating failure to raise it at all—or political problems if the financing is by compulsory taxation. The memory of long-unredeemed war bonds after the second world war could well dissuade buyers. The public, and the City, will compensate the families of dead servicemen, but may be less enthusiastic about buying new weapons of war.

A better way to ensure that the Falklands costs do not chisel away at Britain's security will be to pay for them directly from the overall budget, but to account for them separately from routine defence spending, at least until the major capital costs are paid. Spread over three or four years, the bill will not make a major impact on Britain's public-sector borrowing requirement.

Much of the first category of costs will have to come from the 1982-83 budget, come what may. This could be added on to the base-line budget—the 1982-83 target figure published last year, adjusted for inflation—as a special "Falklands increment". That should safeguard the total level of defence spending as well as dampening some of the impact on the City of an expansion in public spending. Capital spending is economically more desirable than current payments for overmanned public services.

Year by year, the cost of the Falklands campaign will be bearable. The government should make its estimates of the extra costs as public as possible, making allowance for extra tax receipts from the jobs created and materials bought—which we have not included in our estimates—to calm the inflationary fears already rife. In succeeding years, when the ships and aircraft are being built, the increments should be retained, and tacked on each year until the bills have been paid and the armed forces have been repaired.



The Sea King saved the man, but the navy needs a new ship to replace *Sir Galahad*

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JEFATURA DE INTELIGENCIA
SECCION 4
DEPARTAMENTO

Back to the Real Crisis?

The end of fighting in the Falklands must be greeted with relief by everyone, not only the British and the Argentines, both of whom must have wondered just what sort of nightmare they had got themselves into. NATO for one, must be pleased that the Royal Navy can put its main strength back into the Eastern Atlantic, for despite claims to the contrary, the absence of so many ships must have dislocated their programme of training and exercises.

The United States, having seen its Latin American policy dissolve in ruins, must be longing to get back to some sort of normality. The Falklands/Malvinas dispute brought home to the State Department the brutal truth that you cannot please everybody all the time. It is ironic that Latin America has apparently chosen to make the United States the whipping boy, at the same time that the British were feeling aggrieved about the Reagan Government's 'mugwump'posture*. Which probably indicates that the United States really was neutral all the time.

The tragic irony is that the Falklands Crisis really is a sideshow, for all the loss of life and human misery which it created. The British cannot expect to garrison Festung Falklandia forever, and when the mutual bitterness has died down some sort of long-term settlement with Argentina will have to be pursued. This does not mean that the British should not have reacted in the way that they did, for who else was going to implement UN Resolution 502? The world in its present uneasy state of mind cannot allow unilateral military action to resolve what are no more than ancient boundary disputes. Yet that sort of unilateral action is just what Israel has initiated in the Lebanon, in the sacred name of peace, as always.

The Lebanon's tragedy is that it is another one of those historical anomalies, a country arbitarily carved out of the debris of the Ottoman Empire with no regard for the realities of religous and ethnic differences. For many years it appeared to function as an oasis of civilized living and financial prosperity, but underneath all the old tensions of Maronites vs. Druzes vs. Muslims were there. Add to this the Palestinian refugees and the result was a witches' brew.

Israel, remembering that the original UN resolution calling on the Arab States to recognise her right to exist has never been obeyed, never pays much attention to 'world opinion'. Her swift and ruthlessly efficient onslaught on the PLO bases is being justified as a 'final solution' to the problem, but will it be final? History teaches us that there can never be a military solution to a deep-rooted political problem, and even if the PLO's ability to make mischief for Israel is diminished there will still be a legacy of bitterness. And that bitterness will continue to tempt outside powers to meddle in Middle Eastern affairs.

In our May editorial we expressed the premature hope that peace had broken out in the Middle East. So far the strain on relations between Israel and Egypt has not proved too much, but Mr Begin must not presume indefinitely on President Mubarak's commitment to co-existence. We said then that the PLO must have a part to play in the future of Israel, but for that to happen there must be an end to the Arabs' bloodcurdling threats to destroy Israel. The Israelis have good reason for maintaining strong defences, and as they have proved yet again that they cannot be defeated in battle, their opponents ought, by any standards of logic, to stop trying their own 'final solution'. That of course would require something called common sense, but when a dispossessed people like the Palestinians feel so bitterly aggrieved, common sense does not enter the argument.

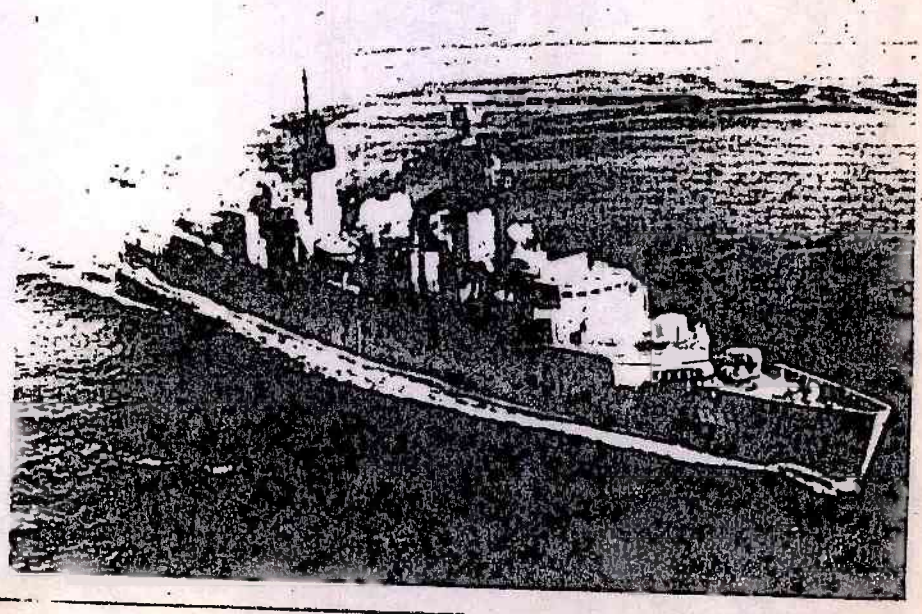
Perhaps the Israelis will be able to deal more leniently with a cowed, defeated and disarmed Palestinian Arab nation, but such a course is unlikely without a major change of heart in Israel. There are encouraging signs that opposition to Mr Begin's extreme views is growing inside Israel, but the hideous destruction and loss of life in the Lebanon will make the task of reconciliation harder than it has ever been. Mr Reagan must wonder sometimes if friends like Mrs Thatcher and Mr Begin are worth all the trouble they cause him. ■

*For those unversed in North American folklore, a mugwump is someone with his mug on one side of the fence and his wump on the other.

Fourth Type 22 Frigate Delivered Early

HMS **Brazen**, fourth of the Royal Navy's **Broadsword** class (Type 22) big anti-submarine frigates was delivered on 15th June, three months ahead of schedule. The builders, Yarrow Shipbuilders Ltd, were asked to speed up delivery because of the Falklands Crisis, and so the Royal Navy now has another Sea Wolf missile ship on strength.

The first three of the class are all serving in the South Atlantic, where HMS **Brilliant** gave the Sea Wolf missile its baptism of fire by shooting down three Skyhawks in one attack. Four more 'stretched' versions with the new Type 165 towed array sonar are building, and an order for a ninth was forecast on 2nd July by the Secretary of State for Defence. Names of the first four are **Boxer, Beaver, London** (ex-**Bloodhound**) and **Brave**, and **London** and **Brave** are likely to be driven by Rolls Royce Spey gas turbines instead of Olympus and Tyne.



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Falklands kit: the MoD speaks

Extracts from a report presented by Mr. Geoffrey Pattie, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement, at the MoD on August 5.

ANY commentary must be in the nature of an informed first impression at this stage. There remains a need for cross-checking of incidents from participants, many of whom are in the process of returning from the Falklands; there must be analysis of tape readout; there must be detailed scientific operational analysis. All this work is in hand but is not yet available. When it is, it will be used to substantiate and elaborate the initial findings.

Caution is particularly necessary in the case of anti-air warfare. There is a need to establish exactly which system was responsible for destroying each target. There may be an element of initial duplication of claims when every weapon within range was firing at incoming aircraft. This will need sorting out in further analysis, as will the limitations on enemy effectiveness imposed by the capabilities of our own systems.

Sustained air operations. Hermes and *Invincible* together provided the extensive facilities required to mount, support and sustain fixed wing air operations from within the Task Force. Up to 28 Royal Navy Sea Harriers and 14 RAF Harrier GR3s were deployed to the South Atlantic. Helicopters operated round the clock in all weathers and from all types of ship including ships taken up from trade. Very high availability was achieved (for example more than 90 per cent in the case of one Sea King squadron for which data is available).

Harrier. This showed itself to be a true multi-role aircraft. The outstanding capabilities, versatility and performance of the Sea Harrier led to a remarkable success in air combat and an easy transition to anti-ship and ground attack roles. The low loss rate, together with a very high serviceability rate, permitted continuous high intensity flying throughout the operation. Only 1 per cent of planned Sea Harrier sorties were not achieved through unserviceability. The Harrier GR3 successfully deployed at sea, operating in its primary ground attack role and demonstrating its ability to defend itself in air-to-air combat. At the latest count, some 1,500 Sea Harrier sorties and some 150 Harrier GR3 sorties were flown. No Harriers of either type were lost in air-to-air combat and only five to ground fire.

Anti-air warfare. Given that the task force faced 120 Argentine fast jet aircraft with initially only 22 Sea Harriers to complement the ships' own air defence systems, the losses sustained, particularly in the highly vulnerable phase of amphibious operations, were inevitable. The lack of airborne early warning (AEW) was a further disadvantage. Nevertheless, the Argentine Air Force was successfully dealt with. One hundred and nine aircraft of all types (including 31 A-4 Skyhawk and 26 Mirage) are currently estimated to have been destroyed from all causes, including destroyed or found destroyed on the ground, evasion, "own goal" etc. Preliminary claims for the main AA systems are: air-to-air combat (mainly Sea Harrier/Sidewinder) 27; Sea Wolf five; Sea Dart eight; Sea Cat six; Blowpipe eight; and Rapier 13. (Rapier was of course only in action after the landings at San Carlos on May 21.) These claims are being further assessed to get the attributions right. On some days, Argentine air losses were as many as two thirds of the aircraft despatched.

Not for the Falklands: Inside Nimrod AEW Mk3 mission avionics prototype

Land mobility. Since land operations were conducted on light scales and mainly on foot, the amount of equipment deployed on land was relatively small. Movement of guns and heavy equipment depended critically on the use of helicopters and the use of wheeled vehicles was very restricted. Of particular note, however, was the excellent cross-country mobility and high reliability of Scorpion and Scimitar, emphasising the value of tracked vehicles in such terrain conditions. These vehicles covered an average of 350 miles each.

Artillery support. Artillery support had an especially important role to play in the success of land operations. Some of the 105mm Light Guns deployed fired at a rate of 500 rounds in 24 hours with no degradation in general performance. Naval gun fire support (NGFS) also played its part, especially in interdiction. Some 8,000 rounds were fired from naval guns in support of ground operations and preliminary assessments indicate that this contributed significantly to the [illegible] Argentine morale.

Countering Exocet. Royal Navy defensive systems both active and passive have been optimised against the capabilities of the Russians, who do not possess an air-launched sea-skimming missile of the Exocet type. In response to this new threat, however, electronic countermeasures, including chaff, were deployed to provide an effective counter to air-launched Exocet. Apart from the *Atlantic Conveyor* incident, only one of the five air-launched Exocets thought to have been fired penetrated our defences successfully.

Communications. The success of command, control and communications (C³) equipment was one of the outstanding features, despite the fact that it would be hard to find a part of the world capable of providing a more demanding test.

Logistic support. The lines of communication stretched 8,000 miles from the UK base, an average of 21 days sailing time. The logistic problems were dealt with by the following:

(a). The successful use of ships taken up from trade (STUFT). Over 50 ships were taken up from trade — 673,000 gross tons — from 33 companies. These ships, modified in a matter of days to be capable of refuelling at sea and many to take helicopters, carried over 100,000 tons of freight, 9,000 personnel and 95 assorted aircraft.

(b). The only airfield that could be used was at Ascension Island, 3,500 miles from the Falklands. This permitted shipping time to be saved by flying personnel and freight there for loading on to ships bound for the Falklands. It also gave us a limited air drop capability for emergency resupply. By the end of the operation some 5,600 personnel and 7,500 short tons of stores had been flown to Ascension using over 17,000 flying hours of RAF C130s and VC10s.

(c). Air-to-air refuelling played an important role in offensive air operations and logistic support. During the campaign, rapid developments were made in our techniques and capability and many aircraft, including Nimrod maritime patrol aircraft and C130s, were converted for air-to-air refuelling. Thirty-five Hercules re-supply drops for the task force were undertaken with an 8,000-mile round trip lasting over 25 hours. Nimrods flew about 150 sorties from Ascension Island, some of up to 19 hours duration. Harrier GR3s were deployed direct from the UK to Ascension Island and from there direct to the deck of *HMS Hermes* in two nine-hour legs. Vulcan bombers attacking military targets in the Falkland Islands from Ascension were refuelled on both outbound and inward legs. ■

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Enduring Tradition of The Gurkhas

In these days of sophisticated weapons of war, a famed force of warriors still strikes fear in the hearts of its enemies with a ferocity learned centuries ago in the mountains of Nepal.

British troops tower over Gurkhas on guard at London's Buckingham Palace.

FOKHARA, Nepal

When word arrived from half a world away that Argentine soldiers had fled at the sight of fierce Gurkha troops in the Falkland Islands, no one here even thought of holding a special celebration.

Explains retired Gurkha Capt. Birta Singh Gurung, a highly decorated hero of World War II, who says he has seen more battles than most people have seen football matches: "The Gurkhas are so brave the enemy often runs away."

Nepal, the tiny kingdom tucked between India and Chinese-occupied Tibet, is home of hardy mountaineers who have fought Britain's wars around the world for 167 years. In the Nepalese hills, no calling is more honorable than the soldier's life. And in this poor land, soldiering also is the best way to give one's family a better life.

Gurkhas come from the foothills of the Himalayas—a land crowned by eight of the world's tallest mountains, led by 29,028-foot Everest—where tricky rope bridges cross deep gorges and hailstones as big as golf balls fall during winter. Footpaths are the main transportation links. Nepal has fewer roads for its size than any country in the world, and distance is measured in hours and days of walking.

In 1814, the British who ruled India clashed with Nepal over villages on the frontier, leading to all-out war. Britain threw 30,000 troops against 12,000 Nepalese, but found tough going against a warlike people whose women fought alongside their men, hurling stones at the invaders.

In one encounter, Lt. Frederick Young's Indian troops fled, leaving him surrounded by hostile Nepalese warriors who asked: "Why did you not run away, too?" As history records it, Young replied with proper stiff upper lip: "I have not come so far in order to run away." Whereupon he sat down in stony-faced composure, prompting an admiring Nepalese to say: "We could serve under men like you."

Freed a year later, Young suggested forming a British force from Nepalese prisoners of war. They were so eager to join, he later said: "I went there one man and came out 3,000." The British called the troops Gurkhas, taking the name from the village kingdom of Gorkha, which conquered the rest of Nepal in the mid-18th century.

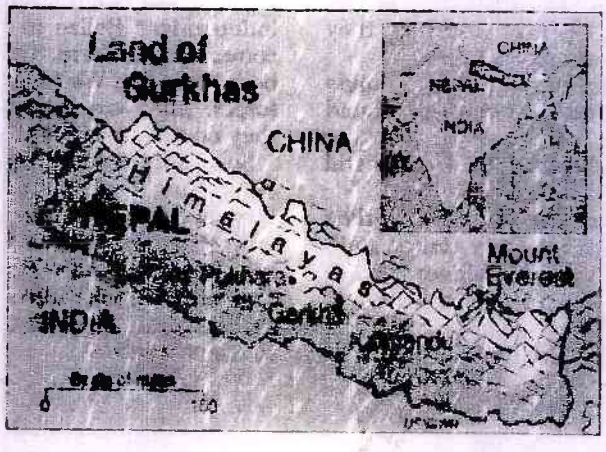
It started an enduring relationship that many find amazing, because Britain never did occupy or rule Nepal. In fact, almost all foreigners were barred from Nepal until the 1950s. Yet Gurkhas saved British India in the Indian mutiny of 1857. And Nepal provided its entire Army to Britain for World War I, suffering fearful losses. In World War II, Nepal again sent more than 200,000 soldiers, asking why Britain waited until after the defeat at Dunkirk to appeal for help. Since then, Gurkhas have seen combat in Palestine, Malaya, Borneo and the Falklands.

Lt. Gen. Sir Francis Tuker once termed it "devotion to the British cause that can hardly be matched by any one race to another in the history of the world. . . . Why they should have thus treated us is something of a mystery."

Three decades later, the answer may be clearer. "Had Nepal been colonized, we would have taken the privilege of recruiting troops as a right," says Lt. Col. Keith Robinson, a Gurkha brigade officer at the British Embassy in Katmandu, Nepal's capital. "Since we've always had to ask, they've kept their self-respect. I think a relationship of mutual trust and respect has developed at least partly because of that."

"Basis of merit." Harka Gurung, a former Nepalese cabinet member whose father and two older brothers were Gurkha soldiers, says: "My clan, the Gurungs, have always liked serving with the British because they earned rank on the basis of merit or bravery, not social status or position."

There is little doubt about deep feelings for Britain. In Damra Gaon, which translates as "village on the mountain," 60 of the 300 families, whose neat two-story, sun-dried clay homes cling to a hilltop near the 5,000-foot mark, have past or present Gurkha links. In one, a proudly displayed scroll tells how "the Queen's most excellent majesty" has granted Tekubahadur Gurung authority as a warrant officer in her majesty's regular forces, a high honor for a Gurkha soldier. Next to that is a faded color photograph titled "The Royal Family at Balmoral," showing Elizabeth, Philip and children on the lawn outside their Scottish castle.



Today, Britain has about 7,000 Gurkhas stationed in Hong Kong, Brunei and in England, where they have guarded Buckingham Palace. Up to 400 are recruited yearly, drawn from areas of Nepal between 3,000 and 8,000 feet above sea level. Below that are too many men of Indian stock whom the British Army doesn't want. Above, in the domain of mountain-climbing

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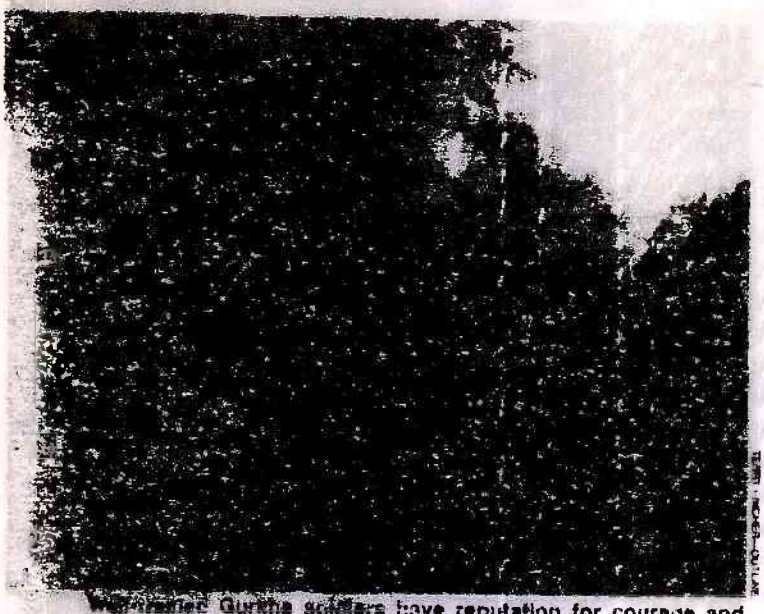

Well-trained Gurkha soldiers have reputation for courage and daring that often terrorizes their battlefield opponents.

Sherpa tribes, it is too difficult to get around, although a few Sherpas who seek to join are accepted.

Up to 10,000 are weeded out by retired Gurkhas who act as screeners before 800 are brought to two camps for a final selection—complete with IQ tests that reject 1 out of every 2. Those chosen will serve a minimum of 15 years if they don't get beyond private, up to double that if they rise to higher ranks. "We get the best of the best," says a British officer. "Basically, what we offer a recruit is the same thing as a win in the football pools would be to an Englishman. With what they save, they're rich men when they come home to Nepal."

Pay for Gurkhas serving with the British is limited by a treaty with India to no more than what those in the Indian Army earn. But cost-of-living allowances in different posts can swell their total earnings. About 75,000 serve in Gurkha regiments in India. About 30,000 are recruited in Nepal. The rest are born and raised in India to Gurkha families.

In Hong Kong, a Gurkha makes about half what a British soldier would. In England, he gets roughly the same as a Briton. Most of it goes back home or into a bank.

"Very British." Today, a few young Gurkhas—sons of Army families who received British educations—are going to Sandhurst, Britain's West Point. Their commissions as officers will entitle them to serve in virtually any job in the British Army. A few Gurkhas marry British women and stay in England when their tours end. One former Gurkha corporal sits in natty pin stripes in a London bank's executive suite as assistant to a ranking bank official. When his former British commanders drop by, he greets them by their first names and lights their cigarettes with a gold lighter.

"They have a sense of humor that's very British," says an old Gurkha regiment hand. "They are incredibly loyal. They follow orders explicitly. They have the ability to mix with other societies. In combat, if they take casualties, they get cross and off they go. There's no stopping them."

Tales of these qualities are legion. In the Malayan jungle in 1948, Gurkhas searching for Communist guerrillas found another Gurkha—left behind with malaria seven years before and told to wait for the British to return. He was still waiting, unaware that World War II had ended.

In China's international zone decades before, a Gurkha sentry was told to let no one enter a railway station until the British duty officer returned. A Russian officer tried to talk his way past on the strength of his white face, and when that failed, struck the Gurkha. The Gurkha split the Russian's ear with his swagger stick. The Russians demanded the Gurkha's immediate execution for insulting an allied nation. Instead, the British promoted the Gurkha.

During the Falklands fighting—in which some 700 Gurkhas took part—Argentine draftees told British officers that they were well aware of the Gurkhas' combat ferocity and had feared being slaughtered by the Nepalese.

Short and sturdy, with powerful legs from trekking up and down the steep foothills, Gurkhas have whisker-free faces and ready grins that make them look far from fierce. But during *Dashera*, the Hindu religious festival celebrated each fall when every Gurkha unit gets a five-day holiday, large quantities of *raksi*, a home-brewed rum made from rice, are consumed. The deadly curved knives known as *kukris*, which every Gurkha wears as part of his uniform and knows how to use with great skill, are locked up so there won't be any mishaps. "A British soldier instinctively uses his fists in a fight, but a Gurkha draws his *kukri*," says an officer.

Dashera's climax comes when the unit's best *kukri* hand beheads a live bullock with a single blow from the hatchet-like weapon, no mean feat. Tradition says if the head does not fall cleanly in a single stroke, a year's bad luck will follow. But accommodation is made for modern scruples. In England, animal-protection societies won't allow the beheading. The Gurkhas dutifully substitute a pumpkin, and the real bullock is killed by proxy back in Nepal.

Other changes are evolving in Gurkha mystique. Gorkha, the village where the militarist tradition started, has changed into a bustling town that is more interested in commerce and trading than soldiering since a road was built into it. In Danra Gaon, Cpl. Bhesh Bahadur Gurung, 27, home for the six months' leave he gets every three years, talks about investing in farmland as his reason for staying in service.

Gurkha Maj. Toeye Bahadur, 51, finishing out his time to retirement with recruiting duty in Nepal, says the land he bought with his earnings will be turned over to relatives for them to farm. Toeye will stay in Pokhara instead of going home "because it's better for my children's education."

Says former Minister Harka: "The British used to like recruits as rustic as possible because they were more amenable to training. But now modern technology means that a boy with a secondary-level education has a better chance than someone from a far village."

Some say the Gurkhas are a mercenary force that should be disbanded. "Nepalese do realize it is a hangover from a colonial era that reflects on Nepal's past, perhaps," says Harka. "Among leftists, it's an issue. For the groups who get economic benefits, it's not important." About 20 percent of financially hard-pressed Nepal's foreign exchange comes from Gurkha soldiers and pensioners. Neither the present monarch, King Birendra, nor the British government is unhappy with the system.

On the contrary, Britain recently formed one more Gurkha battalion, bringing the total to six. When the Falklands fighting erupted, Gurkhas were preparing to go to newly independent Belize in Central America to fulfill defense commitments there. The tough hill people may eventually be stationed in West Germany with North Atlantic Alliance forces. They are expected to stay in Hong Kong, where they do not carry the stigma of white colonial troops.

So it appears that time has not run out for a tradition embodying concepts of honor and duty that have been tarnished in some modern societies. As a Gurkha commander once advised: "Anyone who wants to understand the meaning of courage and selflessness should soldier with a Gurkha regiment. He will return an enlightened and a better man."□

By ROBERT TAYLOR

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rá superar fuertes resistencias internas, tanto en el campo militar como en el político. Aunque los peronistas siguen sin pronunciarse claramente sobre el tema, los radicales han sido rotundos: si alcanzan el poder en marzo de 1984 denunciarán el acuerdo. La alternativa consiste en una moratoria unilateral, pintada por la banca como un salto al vacío. Algo de lo que sucedería ya se vive hoy: imposibilidad de importar insumos o equipos por no encontrar un banco dispuesto a abrir una carta de crédito.

Para la corriente más «política» del pensamiento militar, sin un cierto repunte del nivel de vida popular y una reactivación industrial, no habrá posibilidad alguna de influir sobre proceso electoral ni en atraer a los partidos hacia algunos compromisos básicos: cierta participación castrense en el futuro régimen democrático, y el aval a una «ley del olvido», que amnistíe los «excesos» cometidos durante la represión antisubversiva.

Consenso popular

El presidente Bignone no está entre los que creen posible volver a crearle a las Fuerzas Armadas un margen de consenso popular: su desgaste y los datos de la crisis lo impedirían. Tampoco se esfuerza excesivamente por revolucionar las circunstancias: cuando una delegación peronista le reclamó el levantamiento del estado de sitio, Bignone objetó que ello podría determinar el regreso indiscriminado de exiliados y convertirse en un factor de perturbación.

El problema principal para los militares es ahora afrontar las consecuencias del inmenso descalabro histórico en que se ha transformado su gestión desde 1976. Es ya un lugar común, incluso en boca de ministros y altos jefes, describir la situación actual como «la peor crisis de la Argentina». La línea de Bignone intenta devolver el poder tratando de salvar la responsabilidad por el caos económico y, sobre todo, por los millares de desaparecidos, un centenar de ellos niños, las torturas y el cúmulo de atrocidades de la «guerra sucia» contra la guerrilla. Pero quedan graves problemas más: la gigantesca corrupción (ver recuadro) que mancha a todo el alto mando del régimen y la humillante derrota ante Gran Bretaña por la aventura militar en las islas Malvinas.

Varias conspiraciones de la oficialidad joven están en marcha para ajustar cuentas con el generalato por la quiebra económica y la derrota en las Malvinas. Pero la población civil clama al mismo tiempo por el hundimiento económico y social, las versiones sobre negocios turbios, que habrían enriquecido a los militares y los desaparecidos. Todos estos temas están profundamente vinculados entre sí y la mezcla es explosiva.

Fermín Mungía
(Buenos Aires)

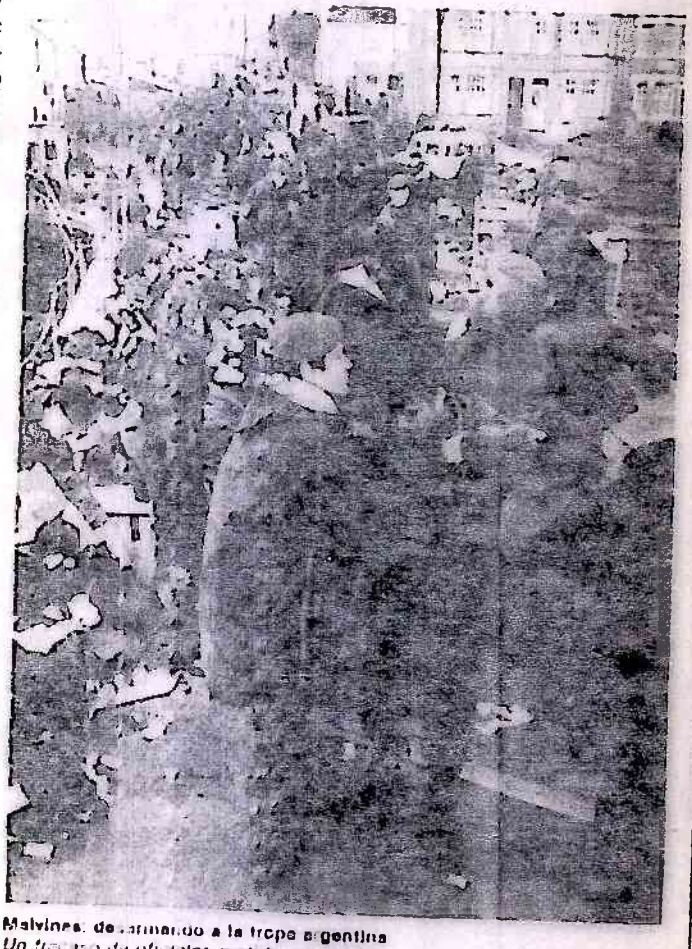
Cómo ser buen soldado

Lo explica un alto jefe británico

LOS peores enemigos de un Ejército son las ambiciones políticas y el envejecimiento de sus mandos. El éxito por el contrario es de los que como en el ejército británico saben mantenerse alejados de las tentaciones políticas, son jóvenes y profesionales. Esta es la tesis del jefe de Relaciones Públicas del Ejército de Gran Bretaña, tras la experiencia en las Malvinas. CAMBIO16 publica en exclusiva esta entrevista el general de brigada David Ramsbotham, realizada por el periodista Paul Sohr.

Sohr fue el único periodista latinoamericano que viajó a las islas después de la guerra, con este motivo esta revista publicó cuatro exclusivas suyas (CAMBIO16, números 557, 558, 560 y 561). Actualmente Sohr estudia la situación del Ejército británico después de la contienda en el Atlántico Sur. Esta es su entrevista:

«Los altos mandos españoles son demasiado viejos como para mandar tropas en el frente». Esta es la opinión del general de brigada David Ramsbotham, jefe de Relaciones Públicas del Ejército británico. El influyente oficial inglés estima que «la política destruye el profesionalismo del Ejército. Cuanto más observo más llego a la conclusión que los ejércitos que se meten en política no son eficientes a la larga». Estas tajantes afirmaciones están dirigidas, naturalmente, al Ejército argentino, pero también alcanzan a otros.



Malvinas: desarmando a la tropa argentina
Un tercio de oficiales retirados en política

Los uniformados ingleses están convencidos que la única manera de preservar una fuerza combativa es dedicándose exclusivamente a sus tareas. Claro que el mérito de esta doctrina no proviene de las Fuerzas Armadas británicas, sino de los civiles. Oliver Cromwell fue el último general que impuso su voluntad sobre las autoridades civiles, y el único que ha ordenado decapitar a un monarca: Carlos I. Desde entonces, en 1649, el Ejército es mantenido bajo severa vigilancia por el Parlamento. Cada año los diputados discuten el presupuesto de las Fuerzas Armadas, y como en tantos otros campos en Inglaterra el peso de la tradición ha gravitado más que las leyes. La fuerza de la costumbre impuso un contingente militar pequeño que se amplió, según las necesidades, en casos de conflicto. En tiempos más recientes se adoptó una medida innovadora. A finales de la década del cincuenta se suprimió el servicio militar obligatorio. Hoy los oficiales británicos no se cansan de loar el carácter voluntario de su Ejército. Ellos creen que el tener la mente despejada de las preocupaciones políticas es una condición fundamental para alcanzar las cumbres del profesionalismo.

A este respecto «el Ejército español es un ejemplo interesante», explica Ramsbotham, ahora que tienen la democracia [illegible] que sus altos mandos son de[illegible]. Muy ancianos como pa-

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ya mandar tropas en algún frente. La razón es que toma mucho tiempo lograr una promoción. El general estima que sus colegas españoles han dedicado demasiadas energías a las pugnas políticas y dando pruebas de lealtad al poder político. En lo que a la voluntad de combate se refiere no hay nada como la oficialidad joven. El caso del comandante tanquista israelí que se negó a continuar participando en la masacre de Beirut es citado con admiración. «Vea usted, él llegó a comandante de una brigada con sólo treinta y dos años».

El mismo criterio se aplica a la oficialidad argentina no tanto por su vejez, sino que por sus ambiciones políticas. Ramsbotham, que estuvo en las Malvinas luego de la guerra, entrevistó a muchos de los oficiales argentinos prisioneros y su reflexión es la siguiente: «Yo sospecho que entre los oficiales argentinos la posibilidad de mejorar su posición gracias a la política se entremezcló con el profesionalismo y me temo que en muchos caso ganó la política».

Comisarios, no

Los Ejércitos del bloque soviético son considerados como un término medio entre el modelo de virtud inglés y los ejemplos ya citados. Ellos tienen comisarios políticos. Pero en dicho caso los oficiales reciben adoctrinamiento, pero no tienen ambiciones políticas. El comandante de un batallón no hace carrera para el Soviet Supremo, aunque el Ejército soviético es un factor muy importante en la vida política del país.

Pero esto es sólo teoría, en la práctica el Ejército inglés también se las ha arreglado para imponer sus puntos de vista ante ciertas situaciones. El teniente coronel Peter Chamberlin, comandante del prestigioso regimiento de los Casacas Verdes, tan prominente en la guerra de la Península (1808-1814), cita el caso de Rhodesia. Refiriéndose al hoy Zimbabwe explica: «Yo no sé hasta qué punto la amenaza de que los oficiales y soldados dijeran no estamos dispuestos a combatir contra los blancos en Rhodesia influyó en las decisiones del Gobierno. Yo sospecho que sí... se podría decir que ello gravitó en la decisión final del Gabinete».

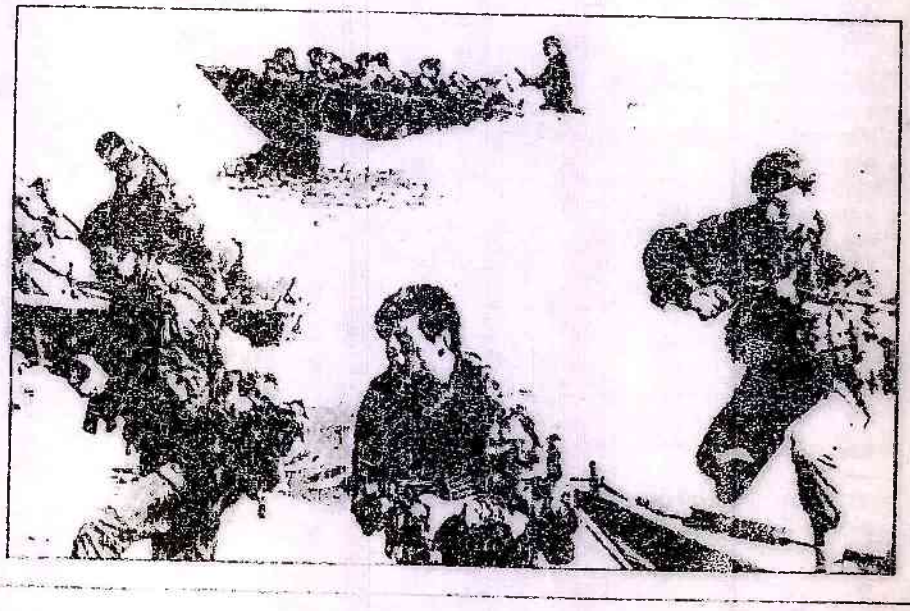
En el Tercer Mundo las palmas se las lleva el Ejército hindú. No podía ser de otra forma, India era la joya del Imperio Británico. Las Fuerzas Armadas hindúes como las de la Metrópoli no juegan ningún papel en la política nacional según Ramsbotham. Para probar su punto de vista sobre el efecto nocivo de la política en los ejércitos recuerda una visita que realizó a la India en 1973. Allí le explicaron que en la guerra con Pakistán, en 1971, la diferencia no radicó en la calidad de los soldados. Ellos eran más o menos idénticos en ambos ejércitos. La diferencia estuvo en los oficiales.

Marinos de la Armada Real británica
Sobre todo, la eficacia profesional

Fue el profesionalismo de la oficialidad hindú la que prevaleció en el campo de batalla.

El otro problema mayor que de acuerdo a Ramsbotham enfrentan buena parte de las Fuerzas Armadas es su carácter obligatorio. El general recuerda con amargura los días de la conscripción. «Yo recuerdo que cuando teníamos el servicio nacional (como denominaban al servicio militar obligatorio) siempre estábamos formando gente nueva. Apenas llegaban a un cierto nivel se iban, y a comenzar de nuevo de cero. En cambio con un Ejército voluntario la progresión es constante.» Una ventaja del Ejército voluntario, que el general no mencionó, pero que la primer ministro, Margaret Thatcher, tuvo muy presente durante la guerra fue la ausencia de presiones populares por la vida de los jóvenes conscriptos. Este fue un factor que jugó un papel decisivo en la retirada de los norteamericanos de Vietnam. Un fantasma que todavía pena en el Pentágono. La sola posibilidad de una intervención del Ejército estadounidense fuera de las fronteras nacionales, y la reanudación del servicio militar obligatorio, provocan las más violentas y masivas manifestaciones de protesta. La señora Thatcher y sus generales tenían en este caso las espaldas

Desembarque en las Malvinas
Una victoria de la eficacia



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General David Ramsbotham
«Los españoles demasiado viejos»

bien cubiertas. La muerte de un soldado profesional no pasa de ser un gaje del oficio.

Los oficiales ingleses estiman que no hay nada mejor que una institución cerrada. El Ejército británico ha dejado de ser un pasadizo por el que circulaban generaciones de ciudadanos. Gente que no estaba imbuida de la tradición de los regimientos. Que no sabe, por ejemplo, por qué los botones de los Casacas Verdes son negros y no plateados como en el resto del Ejército. Pues, por que antes de una batalla sus posiciones eran delatadas por el reflejo del sol sobre ellos, se dice que fueron los inventores del camuflaje. Cada detalle tiene una explicación. El hombre de la calle nunca se empapó de la mística castrense; menos aún del espíritu de cuerpo regimental. Hoy el Ejército es un club privado y exclusivo. Que más podía pedir su aristocrática oficialidad. Según un estudio, el 77 por 100 de los oficiales provienen de un segmento de la población que representa al 12 por 100 más pudiente de la sociedad, en términos socioeconómicos. El 35 por 100 de los oficiales provienen de familias militares. Este círculo tan estrecho tiene la ventaja de la intimidad. Del conocimiento profundo de cada hombre y de fuertes lazos que se desarrolan entre ellos. En la hora del combate la estima por un camarada puede empujar más lejos que el amor por la bandera.

Suma selectividad

Sin embargo, la descendencia no es suficiente para garantizar las cualidades requeridas. El reclutamiento se realiza con un criterio de suma selectividad. En el caso de los Casacas Verdes los hombres se buscan a medida. Un oficial de reclutamiento sale cada año a una gira por 30 de los principales colegios nacionales (la mayoría privados) para escoger a 400 jóvenes candidatos. De entre ellos saldrán 12 oficiales. También es posible acceder al mando desde los rangos inferiores, pero los casos son pocos.

La oficialidad inglesa no tiene complejos. El general Peter Welsh considera que el status de las Fuerzas Armadas en el país es alto: «Contamos con el aprecio de la nación porque no nos metemos en política». Es difícil evaluar el aprecio de la nación, pero la generosidad fiscal sí. El gasto por cada soldado es considerable: por el entrenamiento inicial, de noventa días, se desembolsan 10.000 dólares (un millón de pesetas). Un soldado raso cuesta 19.300 dólares (casi dos millones de pesetas) anuales.

Los militares ingleses practican el culto al físico. De allí también su preocupación por la edad. El general Jeremy Moore, el comandante de las Fuerzas Terrestres que combatieron en las Malvinas, será llamado a retiro en los próximos meses cuando cumple treinta y cinco años de servicio. La jubilación entre los uniformados es a los cincuenta y cinco años. La juventud y el buen estado físico son casi indisociables. En una institución tan jerárquica donde las diferencias sociales entre los soldados y oficiales son abismales hay un punto de contacto universal: el entrenamiento y las campañas. Según Ramsbotham el grado de preparación físico del Ejército es tal que cualquier regimiento hubiese podido realizar la marcha desde el Puerto de San Carlos, en las Malvinas, donde se produjo el primer desembarco británico, a Port Stanley a 80 kilómetros de distancia a través de cerros pantanosos. Para llegar a ser soldado se requiere aprobar un examen que consiste en marchar 40 kilómetros sobre terrenos escabrosos con un equipo de 27 kilos en un período no superior a once horas.

Sin embargo, el Ejército está siempre cien años por detrás del resto de la sociedad, según el teniente coronel Peter Chamberlin. Es difícil no estar de acuerdo con su afirmación. Claro que como buen pragmático inglés agrega: pero nuestro Ejército funciona.

Raúl Sohr
(Londres)

Andreas el moderado

Ya en el poder, Papandreu olvida su izquierdismo

DURANTE la noche del 18 de octubre del año pasado, el grito de «alagui» (cambio) brotó de un millón de gargantas atenienses para marcar el triunfo electoral del Movimiento Socialista Panhelénico Griego (PASOK), que conseguía mayoría abrumadora en el Parlamento de la democracia más antigua del mundo, al pie de la Acrópolis. Todos estaban seguros de que los socialistas habían ganado, pero nadie se lo creía. La sombra de la dictadura de los coroneles (1967-1974) estaba todavía nítida. Un periodista de extrema derecha comentaba en el centro de prensa, ante el desfile de masas enarbolando el sol verde del PASOK: «Pongan ahí un tanque de papel y ya verán cómo salen todos disparados».

Tras una resistencia contra los nazis, una cruenta guerra civil, una represión que negó durante años hasta una matrícula de bicicleta a los rojos y siete años de dictadura, el sueño del cambio se despertaba en la figura de Andreas Papandreu. En su vida había sido leninista, brillante profesor de economía en la universidad estadounidense de Harvard y hombre bien visto entre el equipo «progre» de Kennedy, antes de regresar a Grecia. Con retórica griega y pragmatismo estadounidense, le había prometido durante años al pueblo más izquierdista de Europa (62 por 100 de votantes entre socialistas, comunistas e izquierda en general) que Grecia se saldría de la OTAN y del Mercado Común y que cerraría las bases estadounidenses. Aseguró que iba a reformar la Administración más atávica de Europa y acabar con la ley del enchufe y la corrupción al servicio del caciquismo balcánico.

Meses después, Papandreu explicaba en griego el castizo «del dicho al hecho hay gran trecho». «Hay una diferencia nítida entre los valores fundamentales del movimiento que presido, el PASOK, y la política concreta del Gobierno en

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VOL III

JEFATURA DE INTELIGENCIA
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THE FALKLAND ISLANDS — FURTHER INFORMATION

The British Ministry of Defence published on 5 August a paper called The Falkland Islands Operation — An Interim Commentary of Equipment Matters. This, together with some other unattributable, but undoubtedly correct information has enabled us to piece together further details of the information given in the report in Naval Forces IV/82 and in some cases to correct it.

Air Warfare

There is no question but that the very gallant Argentine Air Force very nearly so decimated the British Naval Task Force that the whole operation might have had to be abandoned. British losses were given in our last report but here is a summary of them.

Ships Sunk

2 Type 42 destroyers *(Sheffield, Coventry)*
2 Type 21 frigates *(Ardent, Antelope)*
1 large container ship *(Atlantic Conveyor)*
1 Landing Ship *(Sir Galahad)*

Severely Damaged

1 Type 42 destroyer *(Glamorgan)*
1 Type 22 frigate *(Broadsworth)*
1 Rothesay Class Frigate *(Plymouth)*
1 Landing Ship *(Sir Tristram)*

Nevertheless the Argentine Air Force suffered grievous losses of aircraft which are now estimated as a total of 109 which included 31 Skyhawks and 26 Mirages. Preliminary figures indicate that these losses were partly accounted for by the following British weapons:

Sea Harriers using Sidewinder missiles	27 aircraft
Sea Wolf close range AA missiles	5 (but only two ships were fitted with it)
Sea Dart long range AA missiles	8
Sea Cat short range AA missiles	6
Blowpipe fired from the shore	8
Rapier fired from the shore	13 (only in action after the landing on 21 May)

On some days Argentine air losses were as many as two thirds of the aircraft despatched. It is noteworthy that the Argentine Army also used the hand held Blowpipe missile and shot down at least two British helicopters with it. They also used the U.S. Roland Missile, but only accounted for one British aircraft with it.

The British ships found the lack of airborne early warning (AEW) a great disadvantage. In addition the ships mostly operated very close to the Islands and the Argentine pilots took full advantage of this and attacked from below the cover of the land, thus the ships own early warning radars were of little use. *HMS Illustrious*, who sailed for the Falklands to replace the *Invincible* on 3rd August is carrying two Sea King helicopters fitted with the excellent airborne surveillance radar, Searchwater, as used in the Nimrod long range reconnaissance aircraft, and will be able to provide AEW should it ever now be required.

Exocet Attacks

The French Aerospatiale Exocet AM39, five of which were launched by the Argentine Super Etendards, is undoubtedly effective when it hits the target, but in fact only two ships were hit by these missiles — *Sheffield* and *Atlantic Conveyor*. Further, contrary to all reports at the time, the Exocet which hit the *Sheffield* failed to explode and the tremendous fire which gutted the unfortunate ship was started by the missile's rocket motor fuel igniting and setting fire, primarily, to the electric cable insulation.

The Exocet which hit the *Atlantic Conveyer* was in fact launched at the carrier *Hermes* who was escorting the *Conveyor* and was some two to three miles distant. *Hermes* successfully decoyed the missile away from herself by the use of chaff, but the missile was able to lock-on to the *Atlantic Conveyor*, which, being a large ship, presented a very good radar target, but of course she had no chaff launcher or other ECM.

This was mentioned in our previous report, but it is now evident that such a possibility had not previously really been thought of. There is talk now of having to arm all merchant ships, particularly those sailing in convoy, with their own methods of self protection by ECM, including chaff launchers. If this proves impracticable, it would appear that, anyhow when protecting convoys, warships must shoot down missiles; something that many naval officers have always advocated as the only possible solution. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the *Illustrious* now on her way to the Falklands has been fitted with the US Phalanx anti-missile gun.

The other three Exocets were successfully diverted from their targets by ECM, which included chaff, but one Exocet was launched from shore and hit, but did not sink, the Type 42 destroyer *Glamorgan*.

As mentioned in our previous report it is not clear why *Hermes* was accompanying the *Atlantic Conveyor*. The Task Force Commander from the very start had said it was his intention to keep the carriers outside the range of Argentine shore based aircraft. It would appear that the attack by the Super Etendards surprised him, as he evidently thought he was outside their

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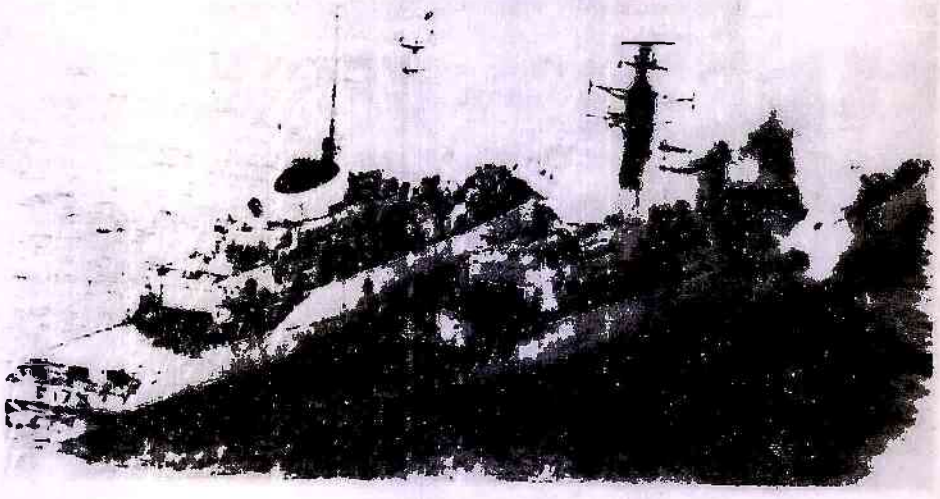
range. It can only be assumed that either they had fitted long range drop tanks or had been converted for air-to-air fuelling unbeknownst to the British. In fact this was not the only time the carriers got within range of the Super Etendards because on 31 May the carrier battle group was apparently again attacked by Exocet missiles which fortunately missed or were decoyed away.

Other Items of New Information

Old Torpedoes Used. It was originally reported that the cruiser *General Belgrano* was sunk by Britain's latest type of submarine launched torpedo, the Mark 24 Tigerfish fired by the SSN *Conqueror*. In fact it turns out that she used two old Mark 8 torpedoes, which are obsolescent but are still carried by SSNs for use against easy target surface ships.

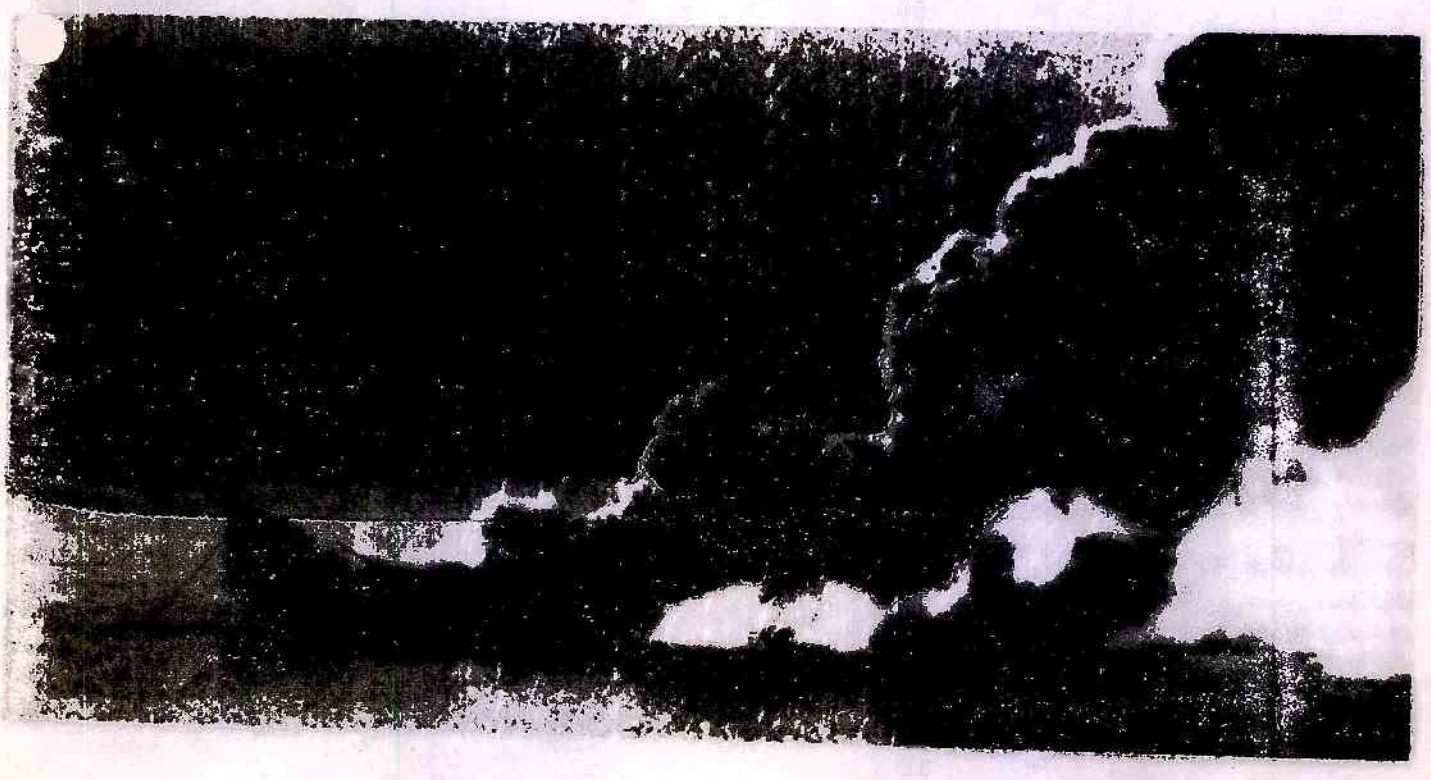
Mining. The entrance to Stanley harbour was mined by the Argentinians, but the British MOD had requisitioned five trawlers and fitted them up with wire sweeps and they were soon able to clear the minefield.

Argentine Submarines. The British, apparently, do not know to this day what happened to the two modern German submarines deployed by the Argentine Navy. But their very existence represented a threat which had to be met. Constant sonar watch had therefore to be kept by both ships and helicopters. This put a considerable strain on the sonar equipments but all the sonars operated with few breakdowns, particularly the latest equipment, the Plessey Type 2016 fitted in some of the modern frigates. It had virtually no failures in spite of working continuously for up to 6 weeks with no respite.



The Type 21 frigate HMS Arrow renders fire fighting support to HMS Sheffield which burns fiercely after being hit by a single AM39 Exocet missile. The warhead of the missile did not explode but the residual fuel of the missile motor caused the fire.

A Wessex helicopter hovers overhead as HMS Antelope, a Type 21 frigate, slips beneath the waters of Ajax Bay. She was hit by Argentine air attack, and sank after an unexploded bomb went off during an attempt to defuze it.



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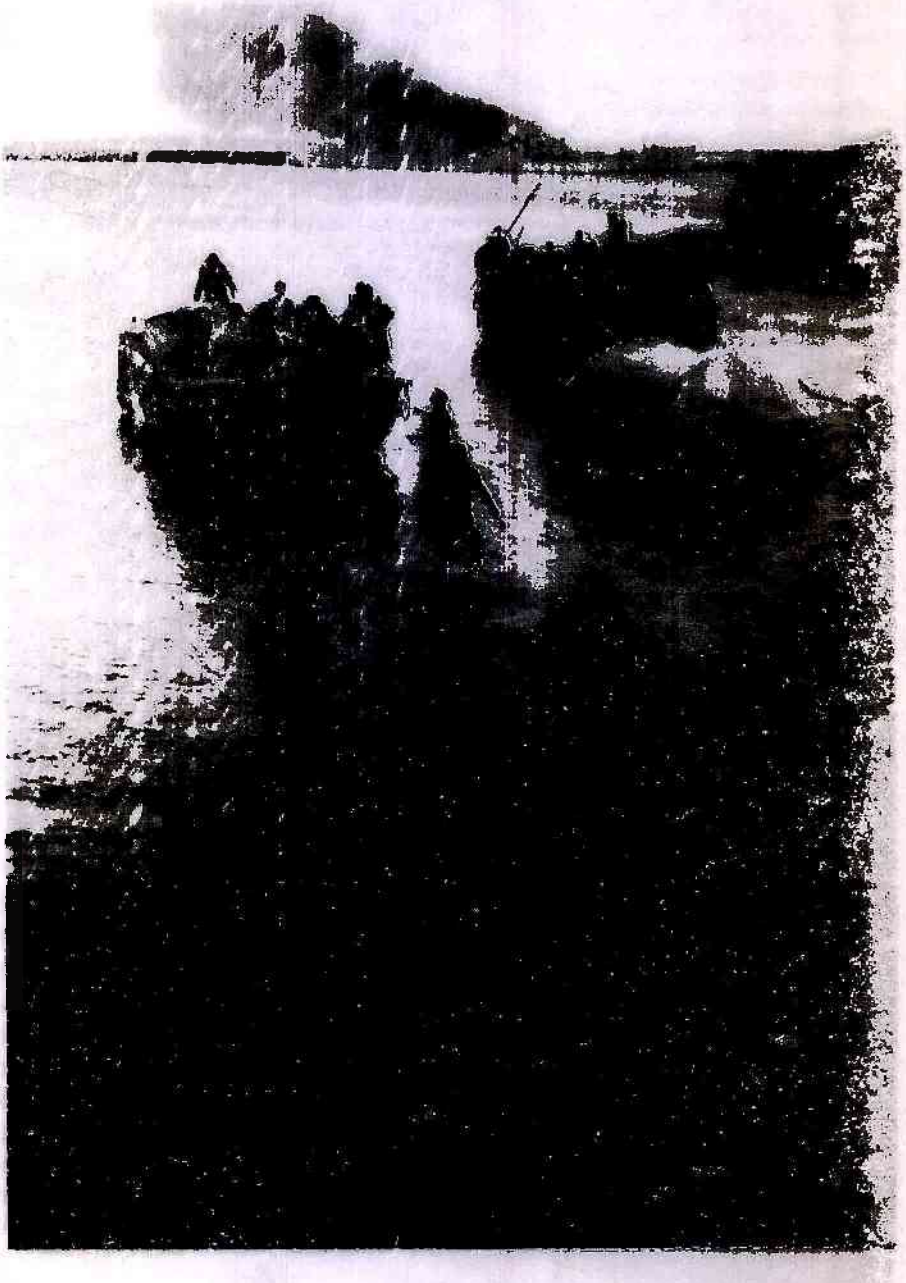
Communications. Communications to and from the UK were conducted by the few ships fitted with shipborne satellite terminals via the US Comsats, certain channels of which were placed at the disposal of the Task Force. The British MOD commented, "The success of command, control and communications (C') equipment was one of the outstanding features of the Falkland Islands despite the fact that it would be hard to find a part of the world capable of providing a more demanding test."

Naval Guns. Nearly all the British warships were equipped with one, or occasionally two, Vickers Mk 8 4.5 inch gun which was excellent for bombardment purposes but of little value against low flying air attacks. In fact no aircraft was shot down by these guns. However, by concentrating a number of ships off Port Stanley an effective sea bombardment of the airfield and in general support of ground operations was carried out almost daily (or rather nightly) during the later stages. Preliminary assessments indicate that the bombardments contributed significantly to the collapse of the Argentines' moral.

Refuelling of ships at sea. This was carried out by the now standard alongside method and even large ships like the *Canberra* and the *Queen Elizabeth II* had been fitted for it and were successfully refuelled on a number of occasions. However, owing to the fact that British destroyers and frigates have to keep their fuel tanks at no less than half full for stability reasons, it meant that refuelling had to be carried out very frequently and this slowed the rate of the advance of the Task Force to only about 15 knots. Thus the voyage from the UK to the Falklands took longer than was expected.

The British ships are of course built for a European war and were not expected to have to spend so much time at sea or in getting to and from the operational area. Whether it will be considered worthwhile modifying them or changing the designs of new constructions remains to be seen.



Survivors of the HMS Sir Galahad air attack come ashore as the landing craft blazes in the background.

Harriers. The Task Force originally sailed with 22 Sea Harriers embarked, these were augmented by 6 more brought out from the UK by the *Atlantic Conveyor* and later 14 RAF Harriers GR3, which are designed for ground attack, flew out via Ascensi using "in-flight" refuelling, someth they had never done before. T proved invaluable and soon took operating from carriers, primarily the ground attack role, but also monstrating their ability to de themselves in air-to-air combat.

Only one per cent of planned Harrier sorties were not achie through unserviceability, altho some 1500 Sea Harrier sorties some 150 Harrier GR3 sorties w flown. No Harrier of either type lost in air-to-air combat and only to ground fire.

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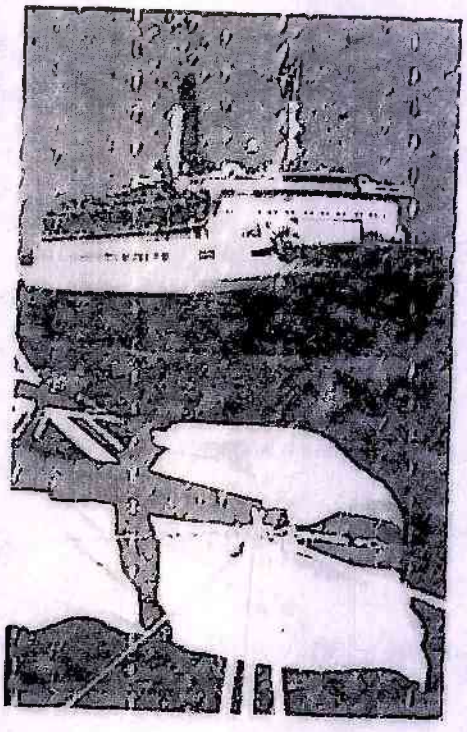
"The Harrier", said a British MOD spokesman, "showed itself to be a true multi-role aircraft. The outstanding capability, versatility and performance of the Sea Harrier led to a remarkable success in air combat and an easy transition to anti-ship and ground attack role."

Fire. A great deal of damage to the British ships was caused by fire. There was no doubt that the ships were far too full of inflammable material, particularly wooden chairs and tables, bunk mattresses, carpets and all the nishings of a peace time navy. The plastic insulation round the electrical cables also proved very imflammable. This is certainly one aspect of the operation which will now have to be studied very closely by British ship constructors and naval officers. It has already been announced that no future ships will be built with aluminium alloy upperworks. However, there is more to it than this. The Type 42 destroyers sunk — *Sheffield* and *Coventry* — both had steel upperworks.

Unexploded Bombs. A great deal has been made in the Press on the fact that so many Argentine bombs failed to explode, but it was quite apparent to the men on the spot that were no faults he bombs themselves. The Argentines only had ballistic, but no retarded bombs. Ballistic bombs are normally delivered in a pop-up or dive profile and released from the aircraft at relatively high altitudes (2,000 to 5,000 ft) depending on the aircraft's dive angle and delivery speed. This method gives the bomb a relatively short flying time from release to impact and allows the aircraft to escape from the exploding bombs fragmentation envelop. Retarded bombs may be delivered from a high speed, low-level profile. After release (30 to 100 ft) the bomb unfolds a retarding device, normally a parachute or fins, increasing the bomb's time of flight and delaying time of impact, thus allowing the aircraft to be some safe distance away when the bomb hits the target. In both methods bomb fuzes will start to "arm" after some time has elapsed following the release in order to prevent unintentional explosion in the vicinity of the aircraft. Normally a small propellor attached to the fuze will start rotating after release and after it has rotated through a certain number of revolutions it sets the fuze in the "ready to explode" position, in other words the fuze is "armed". The Argentine pilots were forced by the British ships air defences to carry out their attacks at very low levels, thus their ballistic bombs simply didn't have enough time "to arm" during their short flying time and therefore failed to explode.



The liner Queen Elizabeth II returns from the South Atlantic. Over 50 ships, from 33 companies, were taken up from trade and carried, modified in a matter of days, over 100,000 tons of freight, 9,000 personnel and 95 assorted aircraft into the operations area.

Logistic Support

Finally the official British "Commentary" had this to say on the logistic support without which the operation could never have taken place.

The lines of communication stretchched 8,000 miles from the UK base, an average of 21 days sailing time. The logistic problems werde dealt with by the following:

- ☐ The successful use of ships taken up from trade (STUFT). Over 50 ships were taken up from trade — 673,000 gross tons — from 33 companies. These ships, modified in a matter of days to be capable of refuelling at sea and many to take helicopters, carried over 100,000 tons of freight, 9,000 personnel and 95 assorted aircraft.

- ☐ The only airfield that could be used was at Ascension Island, 3,500 miles from the Falklands. This permitted shipping time to be saved by flying personnel and freight there for loading onto ships bound for the Falklands. It also gave the British a limited air drop capability for emergency resupply. By the end of the operation some 5,600 personnel and 7,500 short tons of stores had been flown to Ascension using over 17,000 flying hours of RAF C 130s and VC 10s.

- ☐ Air-to-air refuelling played an important role in offensive air operations and logistic support. During the campaign, rapid developments were made in our techniques and capability and many aircraft, including Nimrod maritime patrol aircraft and C130s, were converted for air-to-air refuelling. 35 Hercules re-supply drops for the task force were undertaken with an 8,000 mile round trip lasting over 25 hours. Nimrods flew about 150 sorties from Ascension Island, some of up to 19 hours duration. Harrier GR3s were deployed direct from the UK to Ascension Island and from there direct to the deck of *HMS Hermes* in two 9-hour legs. Vulcan bombers attacking military targets in the Falkland Islands from Ascension were refuelled on both outbound and inward legs by Victor tankers during each 15-hour round trip." (J.M.)

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JEFATURA DE INTELIGENCIA
SECCION 4
DEPARTAMENTO "B"

The Falklands Conflict

Part 3: naval operations

by Mark Hewish, London

Naval operations in the Falklands conflict began at 2100h on April 1, when some 70 Argentinian marines were landed in rubber boats on Soledad Island, possibly from the submarine Santa Fe. *Thus began Operation Rosario, the Argentinian action to gain military control of the Falklands. The Argentinian marines engaged Royal Marines at Moody Brook barracks and at Government House, who surrendered at 0830h. By then, amphibious vehicles were already coming ashore from the LST* Cabo San Antonio, *which later entered York Bay to disembark the main force of 600 marines, 279 army and air force personnel, and their equipment and vehicles. The type 42 destroyers* Santisima Trinidad *and* Hércules, *together with the corvettes* Drummond *and* Granville *and the icebreaker* Almirante Irizar, *remained outside Port Stanley harbour during the action.*

On April 3, a Puma *from the Argentinian corvette* Guerrico *put a party of marines ashore on South Georgia. On its second trip, the helicopter was attacked by Royal Marines. The corvette was also damaged by a* Carl Gustaf *anti-tank weapon. After a battle lasting some two hours, the Royal Marines surrendered. (Extracted, with permission, from* US Navy Proceedings, *June 1982, p. 120).*

The British response to the build-up of tension that preceded Operation Rosario had already started. The nuclear-powered hunter-killer submarine HMS *Spartan* sailed from Gibraltar on April 1, and *IDR* understands that the RFA *Fort Austin*, carrying units of the Special Air Service (SAS) and Special Boat Squadron (SBS), left for the South Atlantic on the same day. The British Ministry of Defence hurriedly assembled a task force to carry out Operation Corporate – the retaking of the Falklands and South Georgia – and the bulk of the force sailed from Britain on April 5.

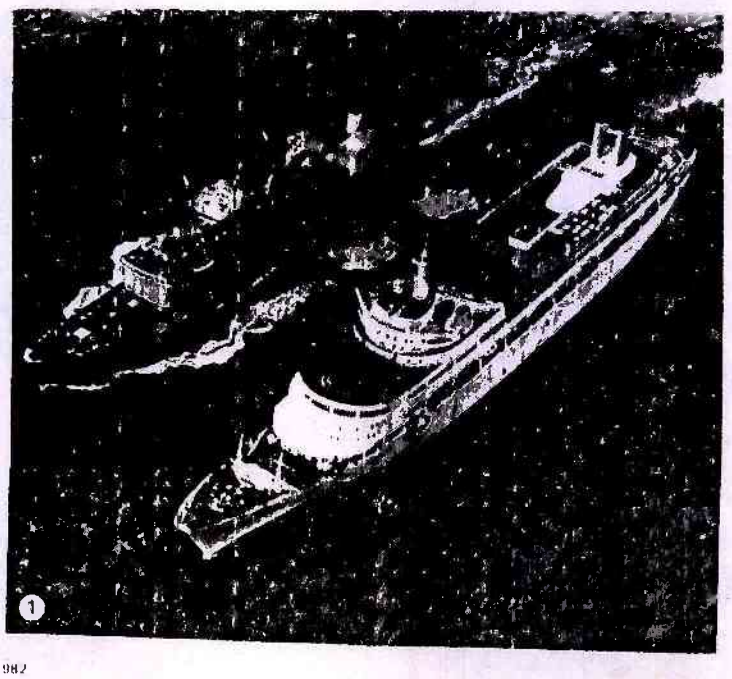
Task force 317

The task force was centred on two aircraft carriers – HMS *Hermes*, the flagship, and HMS *Invincible*. *Hermes*, displacing about 25,000t, has a 220m flight deck terminating in a 12° ski-jump; *Invincible* displaces slightly less than 20,000t and has a 150m flight deck ending in a 7° ski-jump. During normal peacetime operations, each ship carries five *Sea Harrier* FRS.1 V/STOL aircraft for air interception, anti-ship operations and reconnaissance, together with ten anti-submarine *Sea Kings*. Before leaving Portsmouth with task force 317, however, *Hermes* took aboard a total of 12 *Sea Harriers* and 15 helicopters. The *Sea Harriers* were all attached to 800 Sqn of the Fleet Air Arm, which mobilised over a period of only 24 hours. During this time, it increased its aircraft strength from five aircraft to 12, and its servicing-crew strength from 100 to 160 personnel. *Hermes*, with her large magazine capacity and hangar space, was also selected as the base from which Royal Air Force *Harrier* GR.3 ground attack aircraft would operate until they could be put ashore on the Falklands. At times during the conflict, therefore, *Hermes'* air group comprised more than 20 *Harriers* – both FRS.1s and GR.3s – plus the ship's 15 helicopters.

The first batch of six *Harrier* GR.3s to join *Hermes* flew directly from the UK to Ascension Island, a distance of 6,850km, being refuelled in flight by *Victor* K.2 tankers of the RAF. From Wideawake airfield on Ascension, they made a short hop on to the deck of the converted roll-on/roll-off container ship *Atlantic Conveyor*, anchored offshore. Eight *Sea Harriers* followed by the same route, giving *Atlantic Conveyor* a complement of 14 V/STOL aircraft for the remainder of the journey to the South Atlantic. During this period, one *Sea Harrier* was maintained on alert to defend the makeshift aircraft carrier from air attack. On arrival at 52°S (the latitude of the Falklands), the *Harriers* and *Sea Harriers* aboard the *Atlantic Conveyor* transferred to *Hermes* and *Invincible*, although the merchantman continued to be used as an overnight aircraft park until she was hit by an *Exocet* missile on May 24. *Hermes* took the six GR.3s and some of the *Sea Harriers*, while the remaining FRS.1s were used to increase the strength of 801 Sqn on *Invincible*. *Hermes* also took aboard a further four GR.3s that had flown directly from the UK to the carrier deck, with a stop at Ascension; a total distance of more than 13,000km.

The V/STOL force made more than 2,000 sorties once south of Ascension and carried out some 1,650 flights within the total exclusion zone around the Falklands. The *Sea Harriers* in the *Hermes* air group flew 869 missions, dropping 42 450kg bombs and 21 BL755 cluster bombs in addition to firing 14 AIM-9L *Sidewinders* and 27,000 rounds from the twin *Aden* gunpack. In 60 sorties from *Hermes*, the GR.3s dropped 150 450kg bombs (including several *Paveway* II laser-guided bombs) and 25 BL755s. The aircraft also operated from a temporary strip at San Carlos, and an additional four GR.3s arrived, after the ceasefire, aboard the merchant ship *Contender Bezant*.

1 – *The passenger liner* Canberra, *requisitioned by the British MoD, steaming alongside an RFA tanker in the South Atlantic. Like the* Canberra, *many of the large number of merchant ships chartered or requisitioned to provide logistic support for the Falklands task force were fitted temporarily with replenishment-at-sea equipment, satellite communications equipment and makeshift helicopter facilities.*



Horizontal visibility 50m

At times in the South Atlantic, the carriers' flight decks were moving vertically through 9m, while flying was carried out with the cloud base down to 100ft. Visibility was typically 1km and often much less; one *Harrier* recovered on to *Hermes'* deck in a horizontal visibility of 50m. Although flares were dropped into the ship's wake as an approach aid, the key to success was the *Sea Harrier's* ability to use its built-in approach aid and the *Blue Fox* radar to maintain closing speeds of only a few tens of knots. *Hermes'* fixed-wing air group of more than 20 *Harriers* and *Sea Harriers* was maintained by some 140 RN ratings aided by 20 or so RAF NCOs. The men worked 85-hour weeks and regularly had 12 out of 14 *Sea Harriers* available for operations each day.

The battle group based on *Hermes* left Ascension on April 18

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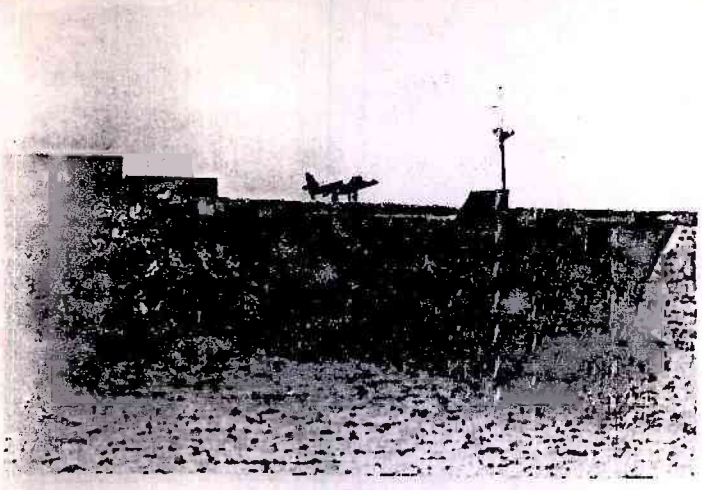

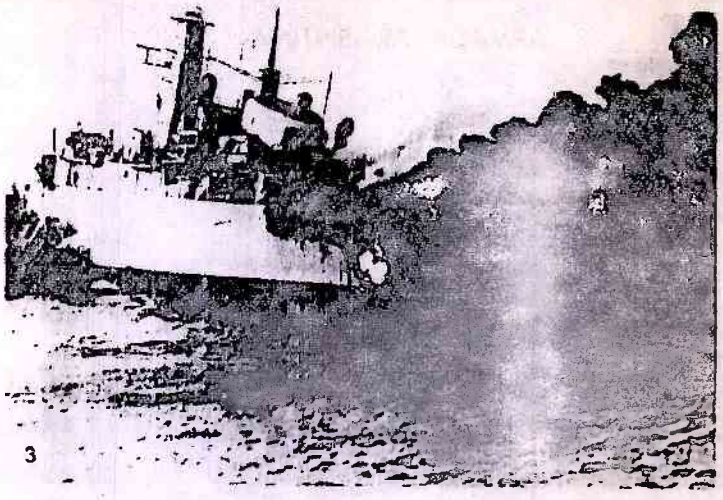

3

d arrived in the total exclusion
e on May 1. Strung out in a long
stretching back to the UK was
amphibious group, together
th warships being sent as rein-
cements. The decision to use
rmes as a V/STOL aircraft carrier
ner than for amphibious assault
to the requisitioning of the liner
iberra as an LPH (luxury platform
licopter) to carry a large part of 3
ndo Brigade. The *Queen*
E II performed a similar role
5 Infantry Brigade.

c logistic tail

The logistic problems of main-
ning a supply line stretching over
re than 13,000km, an average of
days' sailing time, were im-
nse. In addition to the naval
als employed, the task force
olved a total of 54 ships char-
ed or requisitioned from 33 com-
ies and totalling 673,000t dis-
cement (see table). Nineteen of
e STUFT (shipping taken up
m trade) vessels had helicopter
fitted in a matter of days, and
rly all were converted for replen-
ment at sea (RAS). The ships
ad more than 100,000t of
ght, 9,000 personnel and 95
ted aircraft. From Devonport
Portsmouth alone, the Royal
ipped more than 30,000t of
s, ammunition and other
. The complete task force was
for war in three days, with
than 90% subsequent avail-
of all major stores items. The
s taken up from trade
100,000m³ a month of fuel
k force, with 420,000m³ of
a at any given time. On one
e 14, the task force had 26
s, 15 auxilieries, 42 com-
ships, 52 fixed-wing aircraft
20 helicopters at sea or on
over it.

options

[redacted] each other
during the Falklands con-
o first major action involving
surface naval forces oc-
on April 25, when *Wasp*
s operating from the ice
ship HMS *Endurance*, togeth-
er with a *Wessex* 3 from HMS *Antrim*, severely damaged the submarine *Santa Fe* with depth charges and AS.12 missiles. The submarine was beached in Grytviken harbour and her crew surrendered. The following day, the Argentinian garrison on South Georgia also surrendered, following bombardment by British warships. Naval gunfire support was to play an important role in the Falklands conflict, with nearly 4,000 rounds being fired from Mk6 4.5in guns and a similar number from the Mk8 weapon of the same calibre. The Type 21 frigate HMS *Avenger* also claimed an aircraft shot down with her Mk8 gun.

2—*In addition to engineer vehicles and equipment,* Wessex *and* Chinook *helicopters, and other stores, the chartered ro-ro container ship* Atlantic Conveyor *transported six RAF* Harriers *and eight RN Fleet Air Arm* Sea Harriers *from Ascension to the Falklands. On arrival at the Falklands, the V/STOL aircraft transferred to* Hermes *and* Invincible, *but the* Atlantic Conveyor *continued to be used as an overnight aircraft park until she was hit by an* Exocet *missile on May 24.*

3—*A Type 21 frigate burns fiercely after being hit in San Carlos Water.*

British naval vessels involved in the South Atlantic (Cumulative list up to about end-August 1932)

Warships

HMS *Active* (Type 21 frigate)
HMS *Alacrity* (Type 21 frigate)
HMS *Amazon* (Type 21 frigate)
HMS *Ambuscade* (Type 21 frigate)
HMS *Andromeda* (*Leander*-class frigate)
HMS *Antelope* (Type 21 frigate)
HMS *Antrim* (*County*-class destroyer)
HMS *Apollo* (*Leander*-class frigate)
HMS *Ardent* (Type 21 frigate)
HMS *Arethusa* (*Leander*-class frigate)
HMS *Argonaut* (*Leander*-class frigate)
HMS *Ariadne* (*Leander*-class frigate)
HMS *Arrow* (Type 21 frigate)
HMS *Avenger* (Type 21 frigate)
HMS *Bacchante* (*Leander*-class frigate)
HMS *Battleaxe* (Type 22 frigate)
HMS *Birmingham* (Type 42 destroyer)
HMS *Brazen* (Type 22 frigate)
HMS *Bristol* (Type 82 cruiser)
HMS *Broadsword* (Type 22 frigate)
HMS *Brilliant* (Type 22 frigate)
HMS *Cardiff* (Type 42 destroyer)
HMS *Coventry* (Type 42 destroyer)
HMS *Danae* (*Leander*-class frigate)
HMS *Diomede* (*Leander*-class frigate)
HMS *Exeter* (Type 42 destroyer)
HMS *Fearless* (assault ship)
HMS *Glamorgan* (*County*-class destroyer)
HMS *Glasgow* (Type 42 destroyer)
HMS *Hermes* (V/STOL carrier)
HMS *Intrepid* (assault ship)
HMS *Invincible* (V/STOL carrier)
HMS *Illustrious* (V/STOL carrier)
[redacted]
HMS *Minerva* (*Leander*-class frigate)
HMS *Penelope* (*Leander*-class frigate)
HMS *Plymouth* (Type 12 frigate)
HMS *Sheffield* (Type 42 destroyer)
HMS *Southampton* (Type 42 destroyer)
HMS *Yarmouth* (Type 12 frigate)
plus several submarines (see text)

Auxiliary vessels

RFA *Appleleaf* (large fleet tanker)
RFA *Bayleaf* (large fleet tanker)
RFA *Blue Rover* (small fleet tanker)
RFA *Brambleleaf* (large fleet tanker)
RFA *Engadine* (helicopter support ship)
RFA *Fort Austin* (fleet replenishment ship)
RFA *Fort Grange* (fleet replenishment ship)
RMAS *Goosander* (mooring, salvage and boom vessel)
RFA *Olmeda* (large fleet tanker)
RFA *Olna* (large fleet tanker)
RFA *Olwen* (large fleet tanker)
RFA *Pearleaf* (support tanker)
RFA *Plumleaf* (support tanker)
RFA *Regent* (fleet replenishment ship)
RFA *Resource* (fleet replenishment ship)
RFA *Sir Bedivere* (logistic landing ship)
RFA *Sir Galahad* (logistic landing ship)
RFA *Sir Geraint* (logistic landing ship)
RFA *Sir Lancelot* (logistic landing ship)
RFA *Sir Percivale* (logistic landing ship)
RFA *Sir Tristram* (logistic landing ship)
RFA *Stromness* (stores support ship)
RFA *Tidepool* (large fleet tanker)
RFA *Tidespring* (large fleet tanker)
RMAS *Typhoon* (ocean-going tug)

[redacted] non-combattants

HMS *Brecon* (minehunter)
HMS *Dumbarton Castle* (OPV Mk2)
HMS *Endurance* (ice patrol ship)
HMS *Hecate* (survey ship)
HMS *Hecla* (survey ship)
HMS *Herald* (survey ship)
HMS *Hydra* (survey ship)
HMS *Ledbury* (minehunter)
HMS *Leeds Castle* (OPV Mk2)

On May 2, the Argentinian navy cruiser *General Belgrano* was attacked by the nuclear-powered hunter-killer submarine HMS *Conqueror* which fired two Mk8 torpedoes, one of which hit the cruiser near the bow, while the other struck amidships. The submarine was carrying the more modern Mk24 *Tigerfish* torpedo, but the captain is understood to have selected the Mk8 because it was a more suitable weapon for use against a heavily armoured surface target at close range. Marconi Space and Defence Systems, manufacturer of the *Tigerfish*, denies reports that at least one round of this type was fired unsuccessfully before the *General Belgrano* was engaged with Mk8s.

British naval sources indicate that the *General Belgrano* was part of a three-pronged attack on the aircraft carriers *Hermes* and *Invincible* when she was torpedoed. The *Belgrano*, with her *Exocet*-armed escorting destroyers *Hipólito Bouchard* and *Piedra Buena*, formed the southern prong. In the centre were three corvettes, also carrying *Exocet*, and the northern prong comprised the aircraft carrier *Veinticinco de Mayo* escorted by the destroyers *Santísima Trinidad* and *Hércules*. Both the northern and central groups turned back towards Argentina in the face of bad weather which would have prevented the carrier from launching her aircraft, but the *Belgrano* continued until she was torpedoed about six hours before she could have launched an attack on the British task force. She was nevertheless outside the total exclusion zone at time. The cruiser immediately took on a list and later sank.

Following this incident, major Argentinian navy combattants stayed close to the South American coast for the remainder of the conflict. At least three Royal Navy SSNs operated in the South Atlantic during the hostilities, together with the *Oberon*-class diesel-electric submarine *Onyx*, which landed several reconnaissance and raiding parties. The SSNs travelled more than 160,000km during the conflict, with no outside assistance, and one carried out the longest patrol ever by an RN submarine. One SSN surfaced after more than 90 days submerged, the crew having eaten only rice and peas in the last two days.

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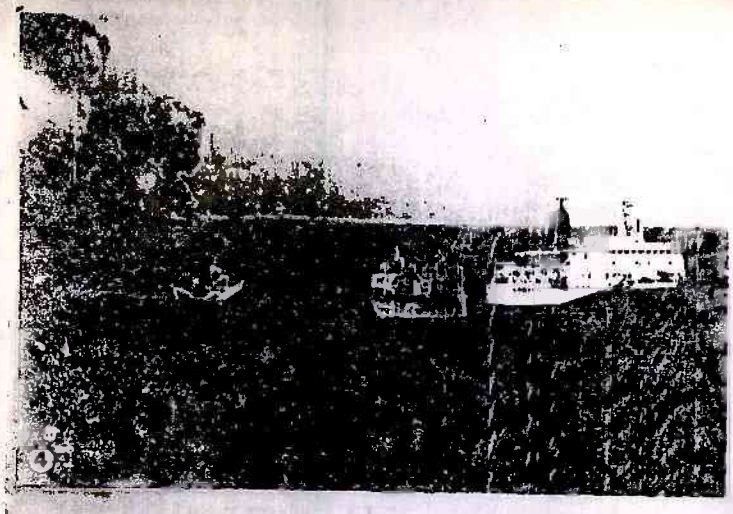

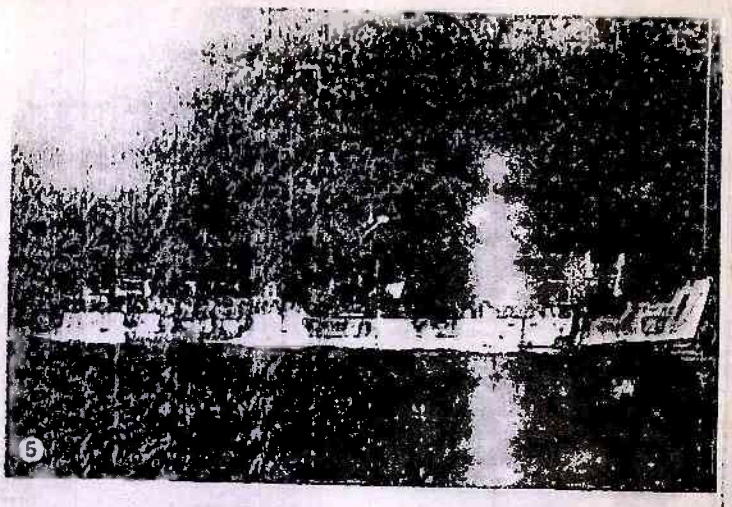

The Argentinian navy's three remaining diesel-electric submarines are not known to have engaged in action, although the UK Ministry of Defence believes that two of them were operating against the task force. Several false contacts were pursued by British forces, and HMS *Arrow* reported that she may have come under torpedo attack while assisting HMS *Sheffield* after the latter was hit by an *Exocet* missile. Torpedoes may also have been fired at *Hermes*, and RN helicopters and/or surface ships are thought to have launched a number of torpedoes – including the new *Sting Ray* which was rushed into service when the conflict broke out.

Sea Skua blooded

Although Argentina's major combattants were deterred from further action, a number of smaller craft and several supply vessels continued to operate within the total exclusion zone. On the night of May 2, a few hours after the sinking of the *General Belgrano*, the *Lynx* helicopters from the Type 42 destroyers *Glasgow* and *Coventry* were ordered to carry out a search for two Argentinian Type A69 corvettes that were thought to be operating in the TEZ. Shortly before they had to return to ship, the crew of *Coventry's Lynx* located what they thought was a fishing vessel. A *Sea King* sent from *Invincible* was fired on when it investigated the contact. At 0300h on May 3, the *Lynx* from *Coventry* was scrambled to attack the unidentified vessel. The helicopter ripple-fired two *Sea Skua* missiles, both of which hit the target. Following impact of the second round, the vessel, later identified as the *Comodoro Somellera*, exploded with a flash that was visible from 40km away. She was thought to have been carrying mines.

The *Lynx* from *Glasgow*, which had been delayed by a radio fault, was sent to search for survivors. When the helicopter was 100km from its parent ship, in winds gusting to 45kt and with a high sea running, the *Lynx* picked up a contact at about 24km on its *Seaspray* radar. The crew assumed that this was the hulk of the target attacked earlier but, as they closed to within 8-10km, they heard what they thought was ice breaking off the helicopter's tail. The noise was, however, caused by 40mm shells exploding around them. The *Lynx* hurriedly backed off to a distance of some 15km, descended from 3,000ft to 300ft and fired two *Sea Skua* rounds at an interval of 7 seconds. Despite being covered in ice before launch and being fired at extreme range, both rounds hit the target – the *Alférez Sobral*, sister ship of the *Comodoro Somellera*. Visibility had improved sufficiently for the *Lynx* crew to see both missiles hit the vessel, blowing off the bridge and part of the superstructure. The captain and seven crew members were killed, but the craft managed to limp back to the Argentinian mainland.

Exocet strikes

On the following day, May 4, the Type 42 destroyer HMS *Sheffield*

Ships taken up from trade (STUFT)

Listed below are the ships requisitioned or chartered from commercial companies, up to and including June 8, 1982, to support and augment the British task force in the South Atlantic. NB: *Fawley, G A. Walker, Finnanger, Ivy, Fern, Cortina, Luminetta, Orionman, Corona and Vinga Polaris* are not included because they were under normal MoD charter, not in the South Atlantic or returned to their owners.

Name	Requisitioned or chartered	Owner	Type	Gross registered tonnage
Canberra	R	P&O	liner	44,807
Elk	R	P&O	ro-ro ship	5,463
British Tamar	C	BP	tanker	15,642
British Esk	C	BP	tanker	15,642
British Tay	C	BP	tanker	15,650
British Test	C	BP	tanker	15,653
British Dart	C	BP	tanker	15,650
British Trent	C	BP	tanker	15,649
British Wye	C	BP	tanker	15,649
British Avon	C	BP	tanker	15,540
Eburna	C	Shell	tanker	19,763
Fort Toronto	C	Canadian Pacific	tanker (fresh water)	19,982
Uganda	R	P&O	liner	16,907
Salvageman	R	United Towing Co	tug	1,598
Irishman	R	United Towing Co	tug	686
Yorkshireman	R	United Towing Co	tug	686
Northella	R	J. Marr Ltd	deep-water trawler	1,238
Farnella	R	J. Marr Ltd	deep-water trawler	1,207
Junella	R	J. Marr Ltd	deep-water trawler	1,615
Cordella	R	J. Marr Ltd	deep-water trawler	1,238
Stena Seespread	R	Stena UK	N. Sea oil support ship	6,061
Atlantic Conveyor	C	Cunard	ro-ro ship	14,946
Pict	R	Brit. United Trawlers	trawler	1,478
Norland	R	P&O	ro-ro ferry	12,988
Europic Ferry	R	Townsend Thoresen	ro-ro ship	4,190
Anco Charger	C	Ocean Transport & Trading/P&O	tanker	15,974
Lycaon	C	China Steam Navigation Co	freighter	11,804
Iris	R	British Telecom	cable ship	3,873
Saxonia	C	Cunard	freighter	8,547
Alvega	C	Silver Line	base storage tanker	5,737
Baltic Ferry	R	Stena Cargo	ro-ro ship	6,455
Nordic Ferry	R	Stena Cargo	ro-ro ship	6,455
Wimpy Seahorse	R	Wimpy Marine	mooring/towing ship	1,599
Queen Elizabeth II	R	Cunard	liner	67,140
Atlantic Causeway	R	Cunard	container ship	14,946
Balder London	C	Lloyds	tanker	33,761
Scottish Eagle	C	Kingline	oil freighter	14,946
St Edmund	R	Sealink	ro-ro ship	8,987
Geest Port	C	Geestline	solid support ship	7,730
Contender Bezant	C	Sea Containers Ltd	a/c & stores transport	11,445
Tor Caledonia	R	Whitwill & Co Ltd	ro-ro ship	10,000
British Enterprise III	R	British United Enterprise	support vessel	15,000
St Helena	C	Curnow Shipping	passenger/cargo ship	3,150
Rangatira	C	Union Steamship Co	passenger ship	9,387
Stena Inspector	C	Stena Co	forward repair ship	9,000
Laertes	R	China Steam Nav Co	stores support ship	11,800
Astronomer	R	Charente Steamship Co	stores/equipment ship	27,867
Avalona Star	R	Blue Star	stores ship	9,784

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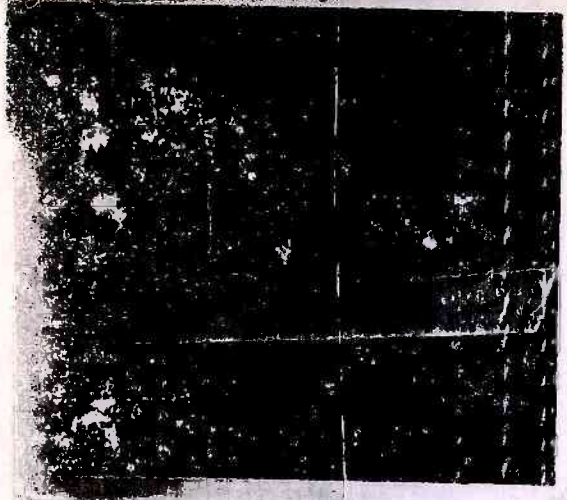

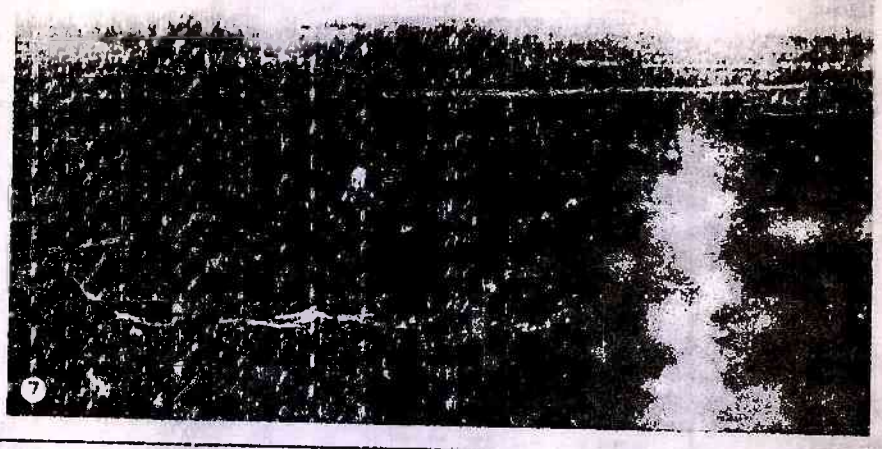

4—*HMS* Ardent *sinking in San Carlos Water. Note the short distances between the numerous vessels in what came to be referred to as "bomb alley".*

5—*The logistic landing ship* Sir Galahad, *completely gutted by fire after being attacked by Argentinian air force A-4s, being towed out of Bluff Cove to be sunk as a war grave.*

6—*The assault ship HMS* Fearless *in San Carlos Bay. Just visible between the masts is a well camouflaged Argentinian* Mirage.

7—*HMS* Illustrious, *easily recognisable by the* Phalanx *mounts fitted fore and aft on the starboard side, taking over from her sister-ship HMS* Invincible *(background) in the Falklands task group recently. The arrival of* Illustrious *off the Falklands has allowed both* Invincible *and HMS* Bristol *(immediately astern of the two carriers) to return home after over five months at sea.*

hit by an AM.39 *Exocet* missile ched from a *Super Etendard* of Argentinian naval air arm. Al- gh the missile's warhead failed plode, the resulting fires de- ed the ship as a fighting ce and killed 20 of her crew. ould sank six days later while r tow.

n May 9, the converted fishing l *Narval*, being used by the ans for surveillance, was y a *Sea Harrier*. She was quently captured, but sank the day. On May 11, an unidenti- Argentinian vessel, later ved to have been the 2,600t port *Isla de los Estados* and ing fuel and ammunition, ex- d when hit by gunfire from *Alacrity*. The following day *Glasgow* was hit by an aircraft that failed to explode, and the day an 80t Z-28 coastal patrol of the Prefectura Naval Argen- the *Islas Malvinas*, was ed in a *Sea Harrier* attack. On 16, the 5,000t transport ship *Buen Suceso* was attacked by *Harrier* at Fox Bay and an own vessel listed by the British s the *Río Carcarania* was also ed by a *Sea Harrier* at Port Both were put out of action.

ndings at San Carlos

y 21 was D-day, when the amphibious group landed at Carlos. Since 1967, the British not formally contemplated hibious landing of brigade gh when opposed by enemy . At San Carlos, however, it empting to put two brigades without the benefit of air eriority. The Argentinian air concentrated its attacks on the ing warships rather than the ibious assault vessels, with ult that the landing force d virtually no casualties. The paid a heavy toll, however, [illegible] *Antelope*, *Ardent* and *Argonaut* being hit [illegible] *Ardent* was sunk, and of the other vessels were ged; HMS *Argonaut* was im- ed and had to be towed into Carlos Water.

Two days later, on May 23, the Type 21 frigate HMS *Antelope* sank after an unexploded bomb within the ship detonated while a disposal team was attempting to defuse it. Before their ships were sunk, *Lynxes* from both *Ardent* and *Antelope* had attacked a 13,000t Argentinian merchant ship being used to resupply the garrison on the Falklands. The helicopter from *Ardent* hit the ship with one *Sea Skua*, and attacks were also made by *Sea Harriers*. The vessel was later hit by two *Sea Skuas* fired from *Antelope's Lynx*, and the crew reported the target to be listing and smoking. It disappeared soon afterwards. *Sea Skua* had therefore achieved hits with all seven rounds reported to have been fired. *IDR* understands, however, that an eighth hit was achieved by the *Lynx* from HMS *Penelope*, but that the target ship turned out to be an abandoned hulk.

On May 24, the logistic landing ships *Sir Galahad* and *Sir Lancelot* were hit by bombs that failed to explode. The following day, however, the task force suffered a substantial setback when the Type 42 destroyer HMS *Coventry* was sunk by bombs after repeated air attacks, and the roll-on/roll-off container ship *Atlantic Conveyor* was hit by at least one AM.39 *Exocet* fired from a *Super Etendard*. Reports from crew members aboard the ship indicate that she may have been struck by two rounds, the second entering the hole made by the first. The warhead of at least one missile failed to detonate, but *Atlantic Conveyor* caught fire and burnt out, sinking four days later. Equipment that went down with her included all eight *Wessex* helicopters of 848 Sqn, three of the four *Chinooks* being carried, tents, runway-building equipment, vehicles, radios and laser designators. The Type 22 frigate HMS *Broadsword* was also damaged on May 25.

On May 30, the group led by HMS *Invincible* was attacked by Argentinian air force *Skyhawks* and by *Super Etendards* of the naval air arm, launching at least one AM.39 *Exocet*. The missiles were successfully decoyed by chaff. On the same day, the tanker *British Wye* was unsuccessfully bombed by an Argentinian C-130. On June 8, the British task force suffered its greatest loss of life in a single incident, when the logistic landing ships *Sir Tristram* and *Sir Galahad*, which were in the process of unloading men and materiel at Bluff Cove, were attacked by Argentinian air force A-4s. Both were hit, as was the frigate HMS *Plymouth*, with the loss of more than 50 lives. Following the loss of most of the *Chinook* helicopters carried aboard *Atlantic Conveyor*, unloading of stores from the LSLs at Bluff Cove was entrusted to a single *Maxeflote* powered raft. This was obviously a slow process, and the four *Rapier* SAM batteries available had been deployed to protect brigade headquarters rather than being retained for cover of the landing forces.

On June 12, the destroyer HMS *Glamorgan* was hit by a land-launched MM.38 *Exocet* fired from a twin ramp mounted on a trailer. The ship was leaving the battle area after bombarding Argentinian land forces in support of an advance by 45 Commando, and the navigating officer spotted the approaching missile in time to turn his vessel partially stern-on. The ship sustained 13 dead but remained operational.

Propulsion considerations

The Falklands conflict was the first involving large numbers of warships powered by gas turbines. Fifteen of the Royal Navy's major combattants were powered by Rolls-Royce gas turbines, including the aircraft carrier HMS *Invincible*, and the company claims that the attributes of this form of propulsion were graphically demonstrated. No engines had to be changed during the period of hostilities. At the beginning of Operation Corporate, most ships that were to become involved were in home ports, and the *Olympus* turbines in *Invincible* were approaching the end of their planned overhaul life. Rolls-Royce immediately increased the on-condition life of its gas turbines by 500h and instituted a policy of partial maintenance so that any engine could be restored to a 2,000h life within 35 days.

Invincible had a new starboard gearbox coupling fitted on the way to Ascension, the 3.5t unit being flown out to the ship by *Chinook*, but the vessel completed her tour of duty during hostilities before two time-expired *Olympus* engines had to be changed.

Fleet-wide use of the *Olympus* engines used for high-speed dash in the Type 21, 22 and 42 vessels increased by a factor of four during the Falklands conflict compared with the same period in 1981, indicating the value of a gas turbine in getting a ship out of trouble or pressing home an attack — from idling to full speed took only 90s. The Royal Navy also pioneered new procedures, the gas generator of a *Tyne* in the Type 42 destroyer HMS *Southampton* being changed at sea for the first time. ✦✦

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ESCUELA DE GUERRA NAVAL

TACTICA

JEFATURA DE INTELIGENCIA
SECCION 4
DEPARTAMENTO "B"

THE SAN CARLOS LANDING

(Marine Corp Gazette OCT. 82)

OF. 035

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Complete surprise is still quite possible in this age of sophisticated surveillance aids.

Falkland Islands

The San Carlos Landing

by Edgar O'Ballance

Photo by Peter Holdgate
Courtesy of Royal Marines Museum, Eastney

Back in 1966, the British Defense Minister declared that British armed forces would never again have to face another opposed landing, and never have to operate on their own. On 21 May 1982, they had to do just that when the 3 Commando Brigade, Royal Marines made an amphibious assault in the San Carlos area to regain possession of the Falkland Islands, which had been forcibly occupied by Argentine troops on 2 April. The British Government had been caught completely by surprise, but the next day the first submarine of what became a 101-ship task force, commanded by RAdm John Woodward, sailed southwards from the United Kingdom toward the South Atlantic.

The flagship of the task force was the carrier HMS *Hermes*. Aboard it and several other ships were the 40; 42; and 45 Royal Marine Commandos, each of about 800 men, and the 2d and 3d Battalions of the Parachute Regiment. Also embarked as part of the same 3 Commando Brigade, commanded by Brigadier Julian Thompson, were 59th Independent Squadron, Royal Engineers; 29th Commando Regiment, Royal Artillery, with its 105mm howitzers and Rapier missiles; and [illegible] of The Blues and Royals (Cavalry Regiment) with 16 light-armored Scorpion and Scimitar vehicles. The Marines and paratroops had mortars and Blowpipe antiaircraft missiles in addition to personal weapons.

The treeless Falkland Islands consist of an area of about 4,250 square miles. There are two main islands, East and West Falkland, which are separated by the narrow Falkland Sound, and some 200 small islets. The terrain consists of low hills, huge rocky outcrops, and bogland. About 1,800 people live on these islands, about half in the Capital, Port Stanley, in the eastern part of East Falkland; the remainder are scattered in a dozen or so widely spaced hamlets, most of which have a grass landing-strip. Sheep raising is the only occupation. There were only eight miles of surfaced, all-weather roadways around Port Stanley, and the tracks connecting some of the hamlets can only be used by Land Rovers and tractors with difficulty, especially in winter. Communication with the main hamlets is mostly by coastal craft or light aircraft. The small International Airport, 6 miles south of the Capital, has a 4,000 feet [illegible]

The [illegible] occupation force at first was

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fairly small, perhaps less than 3,000 men, mainly Marines, with 2 battalions of the 25th Infantry Regiment, 3 batteries of 155-mm and other field and antiaircraft guns. Initially, neither side thought the other would fight, but when it became apparent the British meant business, the Argentines began to hastily increase the size of their garrison, which was reinforced by the 3d and 9th Infantry Regiments (each of 2 battalions); more artillery, radar, supporting and logistic units and 12 Panhard armored cars. Maximum strength eventually reached over 14,000 men. The British invasion force was just over 9,000 strong. The headquarters and main body of the Argentine garrison was at, and around, Port Stanley. One battalion was at Goose Green on East Falkland, later reinforced by a second; another battalion at Port Howard and two at Fox Bay, both on West Falkland; and other small detachments were scattered around the coasts, and on certain islets, such as Pebble Island, for operating radar and observation.

Arrival of the Task Force

The Falkland Islands are some 8,000 miles from the UK. After calling at Ascension Island, which became the British mid-way base, the leading elements of the naval task force, led by two carriers, HMS *Hermes* and HMS *Invincible*, arrived near the Falkland Islands in mid-April, while the amphibious task group gathered at Ascension Island where troops trained ashore and continue planning for forthcoming operations. On 25 April, British Marines recaptured South Georgia, which had also been occupied by the Argentines, and which was some 800 miles from the Falkland Islands.

The opening maritime shots at the Falkland proper were fired on 2 May, when the Argentine cruiser *General Belgrano* (with a crew of 1,042) was hit and sunk, with the loss of 368 lives, by a Tigerfish torpedo from a British nuclear-powered submarine, HMS *Conquerer*. This happened about 30 miles outside the declared British Total Exclusion Zone (TEZ), of 200 miles around the Falkland Islands on direct orders from the United Kingdom. Two escorting Argentine destroyers fled the scene, but returned later to pick up survivors. Orders to the submarine commander were not to sink them. After this, the Argentine Navy did not venture out again from the shelter of its 12-mile territorial waters limit.

On 4 May, the Argentines hit back, and sank the British destroyer, HMS *Sheffield*, with an Exocet (AM-39) air-to-sea missile, fired from a Super Extendard aircraft. The British task

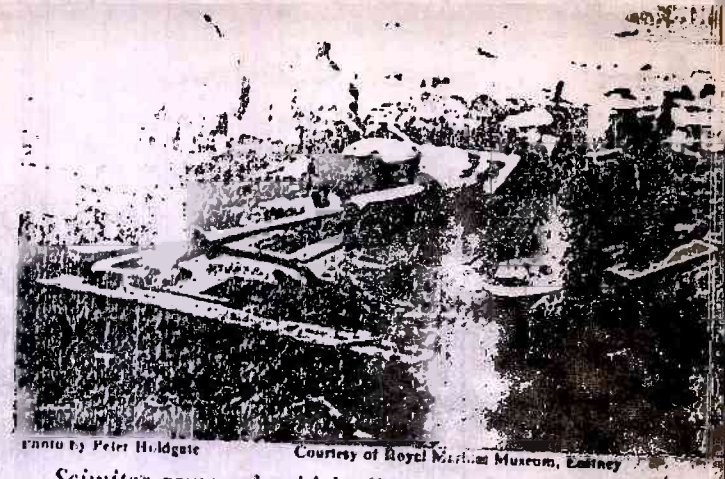

Photo by Peter Holdgate Courtesy of Royal Marines Museum, Eastney

Scimitar armored vehicle digs in shortly after coming ashore.

force was deficient in early airborne warning radar and conventional fighter cover. The *Sheffield*, which lost 20 men, for example, had only the Sea Dart missile, which has a 30-mile range (10 less than Exocet). The British had a good counter missile, the Sea Wolf, with almost twice the range of the Exocet, but it was only fitted to two ships, the destroyers HMS *Broadsword* and HMS *Brilliant*. The *Belgrano* did not have the naval Exocet (MM-38), but its two destroyer escorts did. Over eight ships in the task force were fitted with the naval Exocet (MM—38).

Such technical considerations influenced British strategy. Instead of part of the task force basing itself on one carrier, and stationing itself between the Falkland Islands and the Argentine mainland, some 400 miles apart, to interdict Argentine ships and aircraft, major ships had to remain well to the east of the TEZ to be out of range of land-based aircraft. The loss of a carrier, or troop-carrying ship, might have caused the whole operation to be aborted. Thus the Argentine airborne Exocet missile, although it was thought they had less than half-a-dozen of the AM-39 type, clearly cast a shadow over the task force for the duration of the campaign.

On 15 May, a party of 44 British Special Air Service (SAS) personnel landed on Pebble Island, at the northern end of the Falkland Sound, attacked the small garrison, destroying 11 aircraft on the landing strip, a radar post, and a small ammunition dump before withdrawing again. During this raid the Argentine positions were bombarded by naval 4.5-inch guns. The SAS noticed that when they first attacked the positions, the soldiers, mainly conscripts, ran away, but were brought back again by their officers, only to run away again. Argentine officers became British targets in battle. Pucaras and other short-range aircraft operated from the grass landing strips. The Pucara is an Argentine plane specially developed for antiguerrilla operations.

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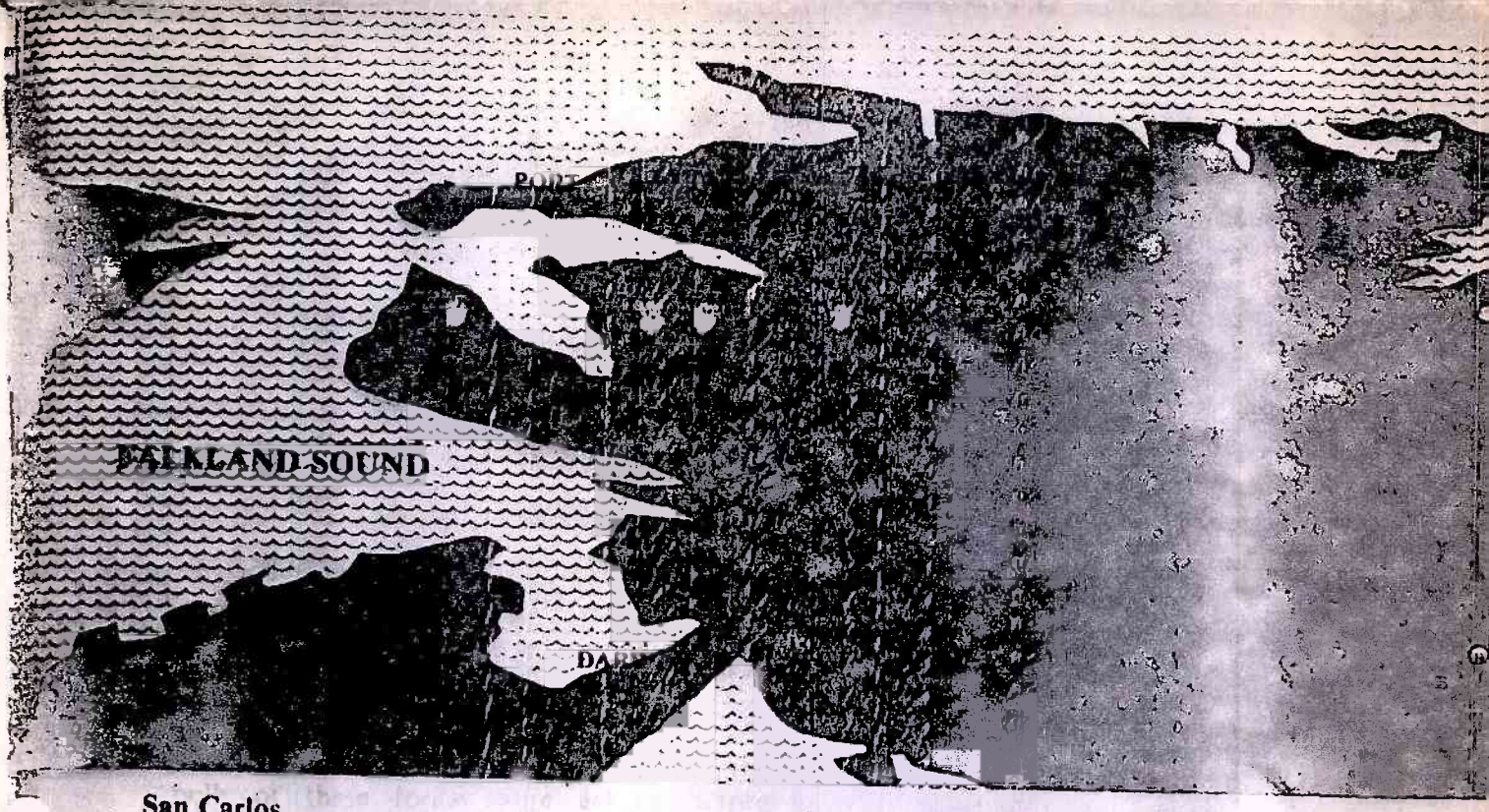

San Carlos

The place chosen for the assault landing was the San Carlos area on East Falkland, at the northern end of the Falkland Sound, where there was a forked inlet surrounded by low hills, which would afford some protection against attacking Argentine aircraft and would provide good positions for the Rapiers, a low-level (up to 10,000 feet) ground-to-air missile. Argentine pilots required a straight run of 2,000 yards to lock their Exocet missiles on to target. The narrow waters of the San Carlos Inlet, and indeed the narrow Falkland Sound, were ideal hiding places for ships particularly when there was mist and low cloud.

Surprise was achieved by the British, who had persuaded their media to give the general impression that the three courses being considered by the task force commander were to launch a massive, head-on, Normandy D-day-type assault on Port Stanley; to be content with nibbling tactics like the raid on Pebble Island to destroy the defenders' morale; or just to tighten the naval blockade to starve the Argentines into surrender. On 21 May, in London, a government spokesman said "Our lads will sleep in their beds tonight."

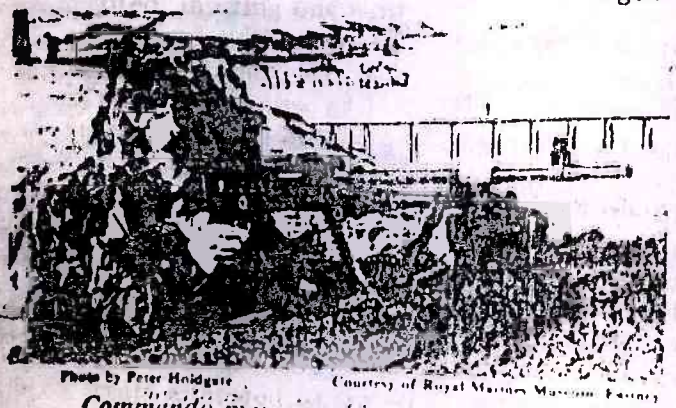

Photo by Peter Hodgate. Courtesy of Royal Marines Museum, Eastney

Commando mans machinegun during landing operations

The forked San Carlos Inlet penetrated the land mass eastwards from the Falkland Sound. The northern fork, known as San Carlos Bay, led to Port San Carlos, a hamlet of some 30 people. Along the northern side of San Carlos Bay, from Fanning Harbour eastwards for some five miles to Port San Carlos itself, were good landing beach sites, and above Fanning Harbour was the low hill ridge of Fanning Head, which was both a good observation point and site for Rapiers. The southern fork, a narrow fjord-like one, was known as San Carlos Water, with the hamlet of San Carlos, also of about 30 people, at its head. The southern flank of the San Carlos Inlet was covered by a low ridge of hills, known as the Sussex Mountains. An uncertain motorable track ran from Port San Carlos eastwards to Teal, Douglas, and other eastern settlements, and another from San Carlos south towards Darwin, Goose Green, and Port Stanley.

A Dawn Attack

D-day was 21 May. The assault troops were the whole of the 3 Commando Brigade, both Marines and paratroops, who landed from the LPDs, LSLs, and the requisitioned passenger liner *Canberra*, which brought them into Falkland Sound to the mouth of the San Carlos Inlet by about 0300. Disembarking into small landing craft, assaulting troops moved quietly to four specified "beaches" on the north side of San Carlos Bay, and to three on San Carlos Water. All assault troops were ashore within four hours. As the days were short with only

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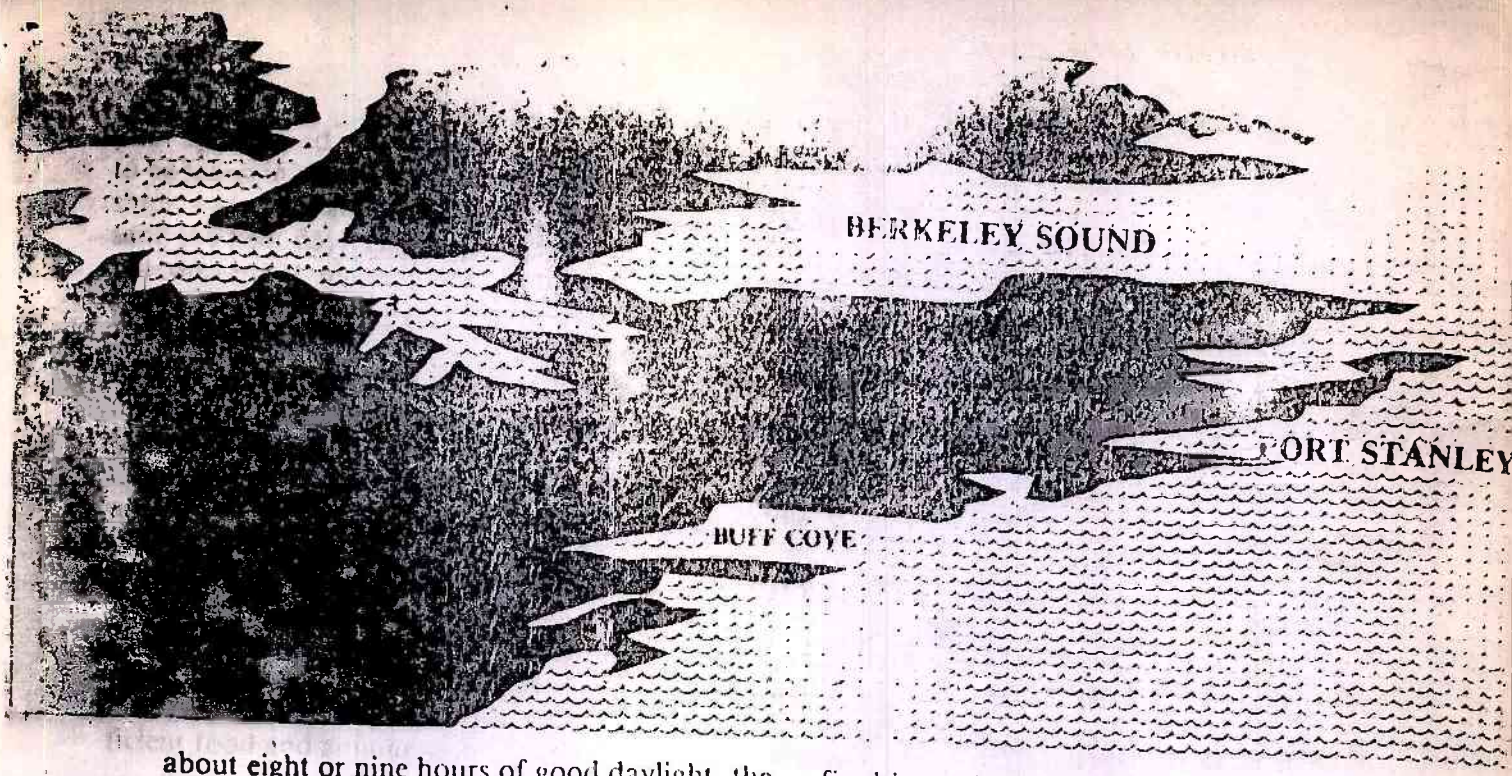

about eight or nine hours of good daylight, the bulk of these forces were ashore before daybreak.

Tactical surprise was complete. There was no moon, but bright starlight, which silhouetted the surrounding hills. Conditions for an amphibious landing were ideal. As the leading waves of troops waded, or jumped, ashore, they felt the reality of the Antarctic cold for the first time, after being cramped on ships for several weeks. Save for one post of about 40 men on Fanning Head, there were no defenders. The Fanning Hill position had been attacked by the Special Boat Section (SBS) prior to the main landings as part of advance force operations. Fourteen prisoners were taken during this action. For the main landings, there was no naval bombardment; silence was maintained as long as possible. Later in the day, however, the British lost two Gazelle helicopters to ground fire from the remnants of the Fanning Head post. In one case patrols of Marines and paratroops, probing forward from their respective beaches, mistook each other for the enemy, and mortar bombs were fired, injuring one man.

The previous days had been cloudy and overcast, with mist obscuring visibility from the air, but the morning of D-day dawned bright and clear, giving excellent visibility to reveal the attacking armada, with several large ships, including the *Canberra*, crowded into the narrow Falkland Sound and other small ships and smaller craft packed into the forked San Carlos Inlet. Tactical success was achieved, and by 1030, some 2,500 men were ashore. It was not until about 1000 that an Argentine Pucara aircraft appeared to see what was happening. It fired its rockets and disappeared again.

Argentine Air Attacks

Early on D-day Port Stanley, Goose Green, and other targets had been attacked by British Sea Harriers, of which 20 were based on the two carriers. When news of the San Carlos landing reached the Argentine headquarters in Port Stanley, the British effort was thought to be a deliberate diversion. Aircraft apparently were dispatched from the mainland—the journey took up to two hours—but were not directed to the San Carlos area. The British had expected, and indeed hoped, to tempt the bulk of the Argentine combat aircraft that were capable of operating to the Falkland Islands into a massive air assault. When the Argentine air attacks did begin in San Carlos about 1030 on D+1, they came in a continuous succession of waves.

The Argentine aircraft flew all day over the crowded, narrow waters, attacking from the east (not the expected west) having extra fuel tanks fitted to enable them to make the necessary detour, concentrating upon the combat ships, rather than the troops-carrying and smaller transports. Although some of the Rapiers were ashore they were not completely set up by the time these attacks began. The ships replied with missiles and antiaircraft fire. Most combat ships had the Sea Dart, which forced the pilots to fly low to avoid the missiles. At the end of D+1, when air attacks ceased at dusk, the British claimed they had destroyed 9 Mirages, 5 Skyhawks and 3 Pucaras, for the loss of one Sea Harrier, brought down by an enemy Blowpipe missile near Goose Green early that morning. The

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